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OR, THE FRIEND INDEED.

A Romance of the Pirate's Legacy.

BY JO PIERCE,
AUTHOR OF "BOB O' THE BOWERY," "TARTAR
TIM," "JEFF FLICKER," "THE LAW-
YER'S SHADOW," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A STRANGE MANUSCRIPT.

"So you really believe in the pirates' treas-
ure?"

"I b'lieve in it fully—ain't got an artom o'
doubt."

"Do you suppose there is much of it?"

"Millions o' dollars, an' all buried in the
ocean with the bones o' the old pirates."

HE BEGAN TO DIG AT THE LITTLE MOUND RAPIDLY WITH HIS HANDS, THE SAND
GIVING WAY READILY.

"It dazzles me to think of it, Jack."

"'Twill dazzle ye more to handle the gold an' silver when we git it."

"Yes—when we do get it!"

"Now don't ye be skepterkil, Al; that ain't the way ter set out in a great scheme."

"That's a fact, Jack, and I will worry your loyal soul no more. Only give me a chance for one more question: Why hasn't somebody else found the treasure before now?"

"Because only a few knew of it, an' them as did were not inclined ter look for it. I'll explain how 'twas pretty soon, but let me show ye the paper, first."

The speakers were two boys who sat in the attic of an humble house on the southern shore of Long Island. Rain was falling on the roof over their heads with a ceaseless patter, and the day was cold and dreary for the season, but the boys cared nothing for the storm, for their rude quarters, or for anything but the subject of their conversation.

Neither was yet seventeen years old, yet one, John Lee, was the owner of the house and a few acres of land which surrounded it. The boy hardly knew himself by the name of "John Lee." He had always been called Jack, and this was frequently changed into "Jack-o'-Lantern," a sobriquet given him because he was of such a lively, erratic nature.

He was a small, compactly built lad, with black hair, dark skin and bright black eyes. His ancestors had been Gypsies, and the wild blood of their nature was not entirely extinct in Jack.

His companion, Albert Bufort, was taller and more slender. He was fair-haired, pleasant and well-bred, and had ways that favorably impressed every one. He had enjoyed greater advantages than Jack, but the two were friends, tried and true.

As Jack spoke he arose and went to a little red box which, after some trouble, he unlocked with a rusty key. There were several papers inside, and he took out one which was yellow with age and well-worn around the edges. This he handed to Albert with the terse order: "Read!"

Al saw several lines of faded writing in a queer, old fashioned style of penmanship, but it was easily deciphered, despite certain peculiarities of spelling and expressions, and he read aloud:

"I, Shubal Gaylor, being now near unto ye point of death, doe hereby make this, my last worldly statement, and doe call upon all who read toe give heed untoe my words

"I was a wilde boy and a wilde man, and tho' I had goode moral training, I grew upp in ways not in keeping with ye doctrin-s of ye church which my goode parents served soe well. Ye name under which I lived, and which here I give, was not my owne lawful name, nor will I give untoe ye reader ye name which was mine by baptism. These thinggs concern not any save myself. Neether need I tell ye full story of my life.

"Near as I am untoe death I will nott say I am sorry for ye ways which were mine, for they gave me pleasure att one time, but sure it is they cutt me off from ye best part of ye world and made me a hermit, lone and drear, in this, mine old age. Wrong-doing always does ye like of that.

"Suffice it toe say that I was a member of old Captain Chubbock's pirate crew, and now will I tell of ye loss of ye goode shippe, Flying Feather. We had met with mear than good luck, and in our shippe we carried much gold and silver in coin, as well as bullion taken from a Spanish galleon. There was blood on every dollar—ye blood of men slain by us toe get it—but such is ye fate of war. Our minds were eassy, and some saide they would leave ye sea and bee landed gentlemen from that day forth.

"Ye ill luck came about in a way like untoe this: We were off ye land in a dark night when a squall struck us heavily on our port side. Our canvas was striipt away as tho' by giants' hands, and we drove rapidly down upon ye land. Old Captain Chubbock had ye anchor dropt, but it would not hold, and we drove uppon ye worst ledge of rocks it was ever my misfortune toe meet. Straightway we began toe sink, and noe boat could be launch'd for ye waves which were rolling with ye greatest fury; and we were all washt from ye deck and ye shippe sank in deep water.

"Of all that gallant crew I was ye only one toe reach shore alive. When morning came all ye rest lay dead on ye beach, and there lay I with one hippe crushed from contact with ye jagged rocks. That injury was my death, and my hours, they are few, but before I die one word will I say.

"When ye goode shippe sank she carried down with her greate wealth in gold and silver coin, and in bullion, gathered by us from captured shippes, wherefor no owner exists, for ye same were slain by us when we did take ye crafts. My hurt has been so grievous that I have never been able toe get toe ye shippe, and I would let ye treasure lie hid forever under ye wave, but my present host, John Lee, hath taken me in a stranger, and cared for me well, and now doe I by these presents, make him my heir and give toe him all ye treasure, which is his merely

by ye getting. He telleth me noe part of ye shippe is visible, but she struck on ye reef known as ye Shark's Back, and there she lieth still.

"Death standeth near me now, and I doe ask ye aforesaid John Lee toe give my bones decent burial, and all of ye treasure is his thenceforthe.

"SHUBAL GAYLOR.

"November ye 16, 1698."

Below this was written in another hand, equally old-fashioned and less scholarly:

"Burial your bones shall have, but John Lee touches not a treasure stained with blood."

Albert Bufort finished reading and, looking up, met his companion's gaze. Jack-o'-Lantern nodded and explained:

"The John Lee mentioned here was my ancestor. I don't know how many generations back he wa, but you see this paper bear date o' the year 1698. There has been John Lees ever sence, an' I'm one, too, you see."

"You infer that your ancestor refused to look for, or take, the pirates' treasure?" asked Albert.

"Just so."

"There are not many men would refuse now."

"Folks were different then, an' ef you ask anybody 'round here, they will tell you that the Lees have always been very peculiar folks."

"So I have been told."

"There is good proof that my ancestor refused ter take the treasure, for the Lees have always been poor as Job's turkey."

"Well, even if John Lee did not touch the treasure somebody else may have done it."

"I don't think any one ever did. Report says that while Shubal Gaylor lived he kept close ter my ancestor's house, partly on account of his injury, an' skeersely anybody knowed of him clearly. There was some stories that he was a pirate, an' that his ship had sunk off the shore, but nobody knowed where. My ancestor didn't know where until Gaylor writ this paper. So you see nobody would knowed where to look for the treasure, an' our fam'ly tradition says all here was honest an' superstitious. They wouldn't dared ter take the money, with blood on it, no more than the first John Lee did."

"That's hard to believe in the nineteenth century, but I know folks were different then."

"Jest so."

"Do you know where the ledge—Shark's Back, is?"

"I do."

"Have you ever made a trial there?"

"No. I didn't know where the pirate ship sunk until my uncle died an' I came inter possession o' my small property, here; but when I read this paper I got what information was lackin'. I now know where ter look."

"And you intend to do so?"

"Yes."

There was a brief silence, during which Jack eyed Albert critically. He then added:

"You still seem skepterkil."

"I don't want to discourage you, Jack, but it seems a bit strange to think of treasure lying out there in the ocean."

"Don't it!"

"I should be glad to see you find it, though."

"You an' me!" cried Jack, buoyantly. "If there is money there, we are to go halves—that is, ef you will make a try."

"That I certainly will do. I don't know of any way to pass my vacation and get more fun out of it than to hunt for pirate treasure. I'll go in with you with a vim, Jack, and we'll do our best, but I hope you won't set your heart too much on finding it."

"I know why you say that, Al."

"Why?"

"Because I am so plaguey poor, an' you think I'll build hopes that'll die hard when I comes ter a failure."

"That's about it."

"Don't worry," Jack advised, smiling. "Ef you know the Lee reputation you must remember we are noted for grit. Ef we fail you won't ever hear me complain, but I don't mean ter fail. I'm in ter win. We'll find the old pirates' treasure, an' I must say it'll come in good play for both on us. Look out!"

The speaker arose and opened the small window. A view of the ocean was thus obtained, or, at least, a small part of it. Not much of a view was possible, for some fog accompanied the falling rain, but the water was moving in toward shore with a fine succession of rollers.

"Look a bit to the right, Al," Jack directed. "Do you see the place whar the water is so rough an' white?"

"Yes."

"That's the Shark's Back. You can't see the rocks, now, an' they are only jest visible at low water, but the ledge is there—an ugly strip of

rock, now I tell ye. The Flyin' Feather ain't the only vessel that has found the ledge ter its sorrier."

"When shall we begin work?" asked Albert, who found new interest stirring within him as he gazed upon the scene of operations.

"Right soon. We can't gain nothin' by goin' out in the rain, when the water is so high, but we'll soon be after the treasure. Hurrah! Al, how shall we feel when we scoop in all that fortune? It will be an atom o' pleasure ter turn millionaires at one jump. Eh, my good friend?"

CHAPTER II.

A MERCILESS MASTER.

It was a few hours later, and darkness had fallen over the ocean and shore. Rain was still falling, and the night was dreary, but not enough so to keep every one indoors. A man was striding steadily through the rain and darkness, like one who has a fixed purpose, and he paid little heed to objects by the way until he reached a small house from which a light shone with cheerful contrast to the gloom without.

This house was a mile from the humble home of Jack Lee, and was occupied by a man named Jonas Amesbury, his wife and an adopted daughter.

The traveler knocked at the door, and it was opened by Amesbury himself. Then the fact quickly became apparent that he was not pleased to see the visitor. He started, looked anxious and hesitated, but this availed him nothing.

The second man stood and returned the gaze in grim silence until the master of the house was obliged to speak.

"Good-evening, Mr. Preston. Will you come in?"

"Perhaps I had better stand here," the man returned, but there was a grim, surly significance about his manner which seemed to alarm Amesbury afresh.

"Not by any means, sir. Come in out of the rain. I have a fire here, you see."

"Yes."

Preston again answered in an uncivil way, but he entered the room. No third person was present, but a fire burned in an old-fashioned fireplace, and Amesbury hastened to place a chair and take his visitor's umbrella.

"A bad night, Mr. Preston," observed the elder man apologetically, as though he was himself to blame for it.

"Stormy!" Preston agreed.

"Not many persons stirring, I judge."

"No."

"It will soon pass."

"Yes."

The visitor's brief replies were not encouraging, and Amesbury relapsed into silence. Preston looked steadily at the flame of the fire, and his face was grim, cold and forbidding.

He was a man of thirty years, and far from being ugly-looking, but he was not a man to win confidence and friendship off-hand—if, indeed, he won them at all. He might be looked up to with awe, but that was the most he could hope for; there was too much of iron in his nature to arouse warmer feelings.

Amesbury's age was double that of his companion, and he looked even older. His hair and beard were nearly white, and he was far from strong, but he had a kind, attractive face, and his whole manner was that of a gentleman. His garments were worn and thin, and it was safe to assume that he had no great supply of worldly goods.

The fire seemed to interest Preston a long while, but he finally raised his head and fixed his gaze sharply upon Amesbury.

"Are you alone to-night?" he asked.

Amesbury moved uneasily.

"My wife and Sylvira are up-stairs," he answered, slowly.

"Busy?"

"Not particularly, I think. Would you like to see Mrs. Amesbury?"

"You do not mention the fair Sylvira."

"I did not know—that is, you did not mention—"

Preston stopped the hesitating reply.

"Why twist and squirm so, old man?" he asked, rudely. "Why don't you say plumply that you want to keep the girl away from me?"

"My dear sir—"

The hasty, agitated reply was again checked.

"Deny nothing, Jonas. You have too often shown me that you regard me as a wolf, and Sylvira as a lamb, for me to hesitate over your words now. You want the girl for your precious nephew, Allan Dix. Why don't you say it and have done with nonsense?"

Preston spoke rudely and sarcastically, but

with unflinching coolness, and his gaze was fixed upon Amesbury with the determination of one who feels that he has the game all in his own hands.

Amesbury, on the other hand, actually trembled with nervous fear and agitation.

"You have a wrong opinion," he faltered.

"Nonsense, again! Let us have one merit, old man; don't let us take each other for bigger fools than nature made us. In some cases, that is pure uselessness. See?"

"I think so, Mr. Preston."

"Exactly. That's one point gained; now let us go on. Do you suppose Allan Dix would accept a position in Chicago?"

"A position?"

"Employment."

"I don't think, sir, that he would care to leave here," humbly answered Amesbury.

"He is head over ears in debt to Barker Grainsleck?"

"Yes, sir; but he hopes—"

"He hopes in vain. His business is getting worse every day."

"But Grainsleck may decide to give him time."

"Grainsleck will not. He is a modern Shylock. His claim is just; he loaned young Dix money; he will have it back. Don't depend upon Barker Grainsleck—you had better depend upon me. I might give help."

Again Amesbury's uneasy motion.

"In what way?"

"I'll send Dix to Chicago, if he will clear out of here and stay away."

There was no answer, but the elder man gazed nervously at his companion. It was plain that he saw more evil than good in the offer.

"I am no hypocrite," Preston went on, firmly, "and I don't pose as a good genius in this case. I want that boy to take himself off out of the way—out of my way. He must resign all claim to Sylvira, and promise never to return."

"Those are hard conditions, Mr. Preston."

"What better can he do by staying here? As a business man he is ruined. Hopelessly tangled up financially, owing Grainsleck a large sum of money—what will become of him if he stays here?"

"He may pull through, sir."

"Cows may fly!" was the scornful retort. "Look ye, old man, do you know what Grainsleck intends to do?"

"No."

"Close Dix up so as to secure his money while he can."

"Thank Heaven," said Amesbury, tremulously, "my poor Allan has youth and strength."

"And liberty."

"Liberty?"

"He has it now but it will be his but little longer if my offer is not accepted."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I hold a forged note with which your precious Allan has tried to keep afloat financially. Failing to make an honest living, he sought other means. He forged the note, and that he has not been dropped on before is because the note is in my hands!"

"It is false!" cried the old man.

"How?"

"Allan is no forger!"

"Perhaps you can convince the court," replied Preston, with a cold sneer.

"I cannot—will not believe you."

"Dare you go with me to the bank to-morrow?"

The calm, unmoved question was too much for Amesbury. His faith in Allan Dix was strong, but such was his fear of Preston, he did not dare to meet the test. He looked at his companion with an expression of stony terror.

"You see how it is," added Preston. "Don't you think it would be well to advise Dix to agree to my terms?"

A deep sigh was the only answer.

"Don't take it to heart, man. I am not half the wolf you think me, but I do want Sylvira for my wife, and I am going to have her. See?"

"Mr. Preston," returned the old man, in a trembling voice, "do you know that Sylvira does not care for you?"

"I do," Preston calmly admitted.

"Why should you want an unwilling wife?"

"What difference does it make?"

"She does not love you."

"Love is a delusion. Such a thing is a dream of boys and girls, a thing aroused in the mind by personal good looks; and it don't take long to dissipate the weak fancy when the hard knocks of real life are encountered. A girl's chances are just as good when she marries a man she hates as one she 'loves,' to use that

ridiculous term. If a woman does her duty after marriage, a man will use her well—it all depends upon herself."

"I cannot agree with you," answered Amesbury, with sudden firmness.

"We won't argue that point now, and I'll relieve your mind on one point by saying that I am not going to ask to see Sylvira now. My business relates to young Dix, and it is done. Will you convey my message to him?"

Amesbury hesitated for a moment.

"Yes," he then responded.

"Tell him that if he will leave here, go to Chicago and renounce all claim to Sylvira, I will get him a good business situation. If he persists in staying here—"

Preston paused for a moment and his face grew dark and menacing.

"I will put him through on the forged note," he then added.

"Mr. Preston, I cannot believe that Allan ever forged any paper!" Amesbury exclaimed.

"It will answer for itself."

"Will you let me see it?"

"I haven't it here. The document is too valuable to carry around in a promiscuous way; some person might see fit to assault me for it. When any one is at the end of his rope, like Dix, he becomes desperate and dangerous. I want to keep my life safe."

The speaker arose and made preparations to go.

"How can you have the heart to say such things!" exclaimed Amesbury. "Allan Dix would harm no one, but you heap all possible crimes upon him."

Preston shrugged his shoulders.

"You are blind, Jonas. One is never a safe judge of his own relatives, and you have regarded Dix as your son. That disposes of your judgment. The Evil One may be in a son and the parents can't see it. So with you. I can see Dix as he is, and I know him to be a desperate man. You had better advise him to go West, and get him away before his hot, ungovernable temper gets him into trouble. That's the advice of a friend. Good-night, Jonas!"

As the last words were spoken Preston opened the door and passed out. He closed it again and was gone.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT WAS HEARD AT SAM DICK'S GATE.

ABOUT nine o'clock the rain ceased to fall.

"Be you sleepy, Al?" asked Jack Lee, as he laid aside a well-worn book—the old house did not afford a great supply of literature, and what it contained had been well gone through.

"No," answered young Buford. "Why?"

"S'pose we go out for a bit of a walk?"

"I'm with you; a little fresh air before we turn in will do us good, and make us sleep all the sounder afterward."

"We may meet the ghost of Shubal Gaylor."

"Or find the old pirate's treasure washed high and dry on land," laughed Albert.

"Or ketch cold," more practically added Jack.

None of these possibilities deterred the boys, and they started to leave the house. A light still burned in the kitchen, and an old woman sat sleeping in a chair. She had been the housekeeper of the former owner of the house, and as she was a favorite with Jack-o'-Lantern, it was probable that she would pass the remainder of her days in that capacity for Jack.

Her name was Electa Rhodes.

She did not awaken, and the boys left the house. Jack looked at the sky critically. The night was dark, and the clouds had not broken away to any great extent, but the wind and the general appearance of everything indicated that the rain was about over.

"Safe enough," Jack commented. "Let's go down on the beach."

Albert did not object. Since he read the old pirate's manuscript he had gained new interest in the coast line, and it would be some satisfaction to look out toward the place where a treasure was reputed to lie under the rolling waves.

He had not expected to see anything of the exact place, but was agreeably disappointed. When they reached the beach the rollers could be seen following each other in, and coming with considerable regularity and order except at one point.

There they seemed to encounter some obstacle, and were churned to white foam, as well as flung high in air.

"The Shark's Back!" announced Jack, tersely, as he pointed.

"Then it's really there?"

"Sure pop. The ledge ain't very long, which

makes it all the easier for us, but it has made it all the worse for crafts ever since they sailed along the shore; they'd drive over the rocks onawake, you see."

"And you are sure this is the ledge referred to by Shubal Gaylor?"

"No doubt on it."

"Jack, we must have that treasure!"

Young Lee laughed.

"I guess you've got the fever, too."

"I have. Perhaps the storm gave it to me. Anyhow, I am strongly in favor of giving the matter a good trial. I find it hard to believe that no one ever tested Gaylor's veracity before now, but if they were so foolish as to pass the chance by, we won't repeat their folly."

"Bet your boots we won't!"

Jack-o'-Lantern spoke with emphasis and then went on in his sanguine way to tell how they would proceed to get the treasure and what they would do with it when found.

The boys lingered around the place for some time, and then walked toward the east.

Jack's little piece of land was by no means fertile or valuable, but not far away were farms which were valuable enough to delight any one. Between these ran a road, and near the water, on the east side of the highway, was a place which had once been owned by a man named Samuel Dickson. Jack mentioned this fact as they went along, and pointed out a barely-visible lane which led up the hill to the house once occupied by Dickson.

"I kin jest remember him," Jack added. "Sam Dick, everybody called him. The big red barn on the hill was built jest after he died, an' everybody calls it the 'Sam Dick place' now, an' speaks of 'Sam Dick's lane' an' 'Sam Dick's gate.' We'll walk along past there, an' then go home."

Albert did not object, and they walked on in the indicated direction. As they neared the gate the sound of voices reached their ears, and it became clear that two men were standing at that point, engaged in conversation.

Jack put out his hand and stopped his friend.

"Wait!" he directed. "They're havin' a racket."

His assertion seemed to be well founded, for the voices arose louder and sharper than would have been the case in a friendly conversation.

"It's a wet night for a quarrel," remarked Albert, dryly.

"I know them voices."

"Do you?"

"Yes. One is old Barker Grainsleck's. I'd know his voice anywhar. He's the meanest man I ever knew, an' his voice shows it—nothin' square or manly about him or his voice."

"The other voice sounds like a young man's."

"It is; it's Allan Dix who's speakin'. I'll bet I can tell what the trouble is about. Dix owes Barker money, an' as Dix is very shaky in business, I'll bet Grainsleck is pressin' him. He's mean enough ter take a man's last cent, right or wrong."

Jack had advanced several paces, and the voices became clearer. He now directed Albert to listen, and distinct words were borne to their ears by the wind.

"I won't wait another day!" declared a sharp, peevish voice. "I've been easy with you, and given you enough time."

It was Grainsleck who spoke, and the reply came in Allan Dix's deeper tones.

"How much time have you given me?"

"I have been easy with you."

"Mr. Grainsleck, when is your money due?"

"To-morrow."

"Then how can you say you have been 'easy' with me? You have given me absolutely no time."

"I've knowed for some time you was bound to fail, but I never made any row."

"For a business man, you talk strangely. Your money is not due until to-morrow, and could not have been collected before, anyway; and you knew two things: First, that I was an honest man, and would not defraud you; secondly, that you were too well secured to lose in any case."

"Fine talk—fine talk!" cried the old man, more peevishly than ever, "but don't let us have any more of it. I want my money to-morrow."

"Mr. Grainsleck, if you will wait a little I will try to—"

"Yes, yes; wait and let you sink it all."

"I hope to get out of my hard corner, sir."

"You won't do it."

"I can try."

"And make matters worse, and squander all my money."

"You seem bent upon wronging me!" uttered Dix, bitterly.

"What! what!" cried Grainsleck, raising his voice to a shrill, angry key; "what audacity is this? I wrong you? I wrong you, when—"

"Yes; you are bent upon wronging me," retorted the younger man.

"You lie, you young scamp—you lie!"

"Be careful!"

"What?"

"You shall not add insult to injury. I refuse to listen to such talk."

"I shall say what I please."

"Not to me, sir."

"How'll you prevent it?"

"By force, if need be. Have a care how you conduct yourself, Barker Grainsleck; I won't bear everything. I am about mad with the troubles that beset me. Nobody was ever more anxious to succeed in business—"

"Yes, yes; so you can marry Sylvira."

"What is that to you?"

"You never will marry her; Preston will be the man."

"Say," observed Jack Lee, to his friend, "old Barker will get himself inter trouble yet. He's sayin' all he can ter make Dix mad, an' he ain't got the hoss-sense ter see he may carry it too fur. 'Twouldn't s'prise me ter see Allan hit him a lick—an' I wish he would, too. Barker Grainsleck is the meanest man I ever see, an' he's a miser. He'd ought ter be hit, by gracious!"

"Let's go away, Jack," suggested Albert.

"Why?"

"If there is to be trouble, I don't want to see it."

"I do."

"Perhaps you'd like to be a witness in court?"

"Yes—ag'in' Barker."

"Wouldn't you have to testify the other way if Dix hit the miser?"

"There is somethin' in that."

"I move we go on."

Jack devoted more time to listening. He had lost the run of what the two men were saying, but another chance was given as Albert ceased speaking, and he improved it.

The voices of the men by Sam Dick's gate were plain and excited.

"Don't press me too far!" uttered Dix, in an unsteady voice.

"I'm going to have my rights."

"Do you know what you'd get if you had your rights?"

"What, youngster, what?"

"A thrashing!"

"Oho! you threaten, do you?"

"I warn you to be careful!"

"So do I warn you. I always knowed you was a ruffian, and you are showing it now."

"Beware, Barker Grainsleck!"

Albert pulled at Jack Lee's sleeve.

"I'm going!" he said, firmly.

He turned as he spoke and walked away, and his companion followed reluctantly.

"I hate ter go," Jack admitted, "fur thar is goin' ter be some fun by Sam Dick's gate. Allan won't bear much more without drop-pin' on the miser, an' you know thet he deserves it."

"That may all be, and I am prepared to believe that he is just the kind of a man you represent; but Allan Dix will not help himself in a business sense, nor do himself any honor, by attacking the miser. Neither shall we help ourselves by seeing it. There are times when fighting is necessary, but I don't approve of it when it can be avoided."

Jack-o'-Lantern laughed.

"I know your views, Al, an' I dare say you are right; but I wa'n't brought up as you was. I brought myself up, an' never had much trainin'. I reckon the Gypsy blood is strong in my veins. However, we won't think any more 'bout this case. What we want is ter think 'bout Shubal Gaylor an' the treasure by the Shark's Back."

"And get it—if we can."

Both boys laughed, and they went on home without any suspicion of what was occurring at Sam Dick's gate.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEARCH FOR THE PIRATE SHIP.

DAY was just breaking the following morning when Jack and Albert left the house and started toward the beach. The former carried a pair of oars over his shoulder, and his manner was more serious than usual.

They had business on hand of no small importance, and his high spirits had subsided to a more business-like level.

Down near a bluff, which broke the line of

beach at the western end, Jack had a boat, and they sought that point at once. As the craft had been drawn high and dry upon the land the storm had not affected it in the least, and they were soon dragging it toward the water.

All signs of rain had passed away, and as the wind had died out many hours before, the waves had subsided and left the water nearly as calm as ever. No trouble was to be apprehended on that point, though if any one had seen them putting out, it would probably have caused the comment that it was not a good morning for fishing.

Jack took the oars and rowed toward the Shark's Back, and in a short time they had reached the scene of their future labor. This done, the anchor was dropped, and when it was found to be fast, Jack looked at Albert and nodded sharply.

"Now for business," he observed.

"I feel anxious," declared Albert.

"Why?"

"Some harm may come to you down there under water."

"Some harm may come to me up here above water."

"That's not a fair argument. Are there sharks around here?"

"Sometimes."

"Suppose you meet one?"

"I shall refuse to shake hands."

"Nonsense! Be serious, Jack."

"Well, Al, I ain't afraid on 'em. I've been in swimmin' off this beach too many times, but I'll admit there is danger. Eph Crane, a fisherman, was killed by a shark not a league from here last year; but, as a rule, there ain't no danger. We who live here git so we don't give the sharks much thought. One may show up as soon as I go down, or we may be here a month an' never see a fin. I ain't afraid, anyhow."

While speaking Jack had been casting off his clothing, and he was now ready for the water. He only paused to direct Albert to help him into the boat quickly in case he showed signs of disturbance when he reappeared.

Then he left the craft and sunk in the water.

Albert Buford found himself beset with doubts, hopes and fears which made him really nervous. The search for old Shubal Gaylor's treasure was begun, and it was among the things possible that Jack might find it at once.

This, however, would be a streak of luck too good to be expected. If they ever found the pirate ship—not to mention the treasure—it would be better luck than Albert expected.

Jack was more likely to encounter a shark than any treasure, be it Shubal Gaylor's or that of somebody else.

Nothing was to be seen of his associate, but he looked at the spot where he had gone down and grew more nervous each moment. The idea began to grow in his mind that Jack had been under water longer than any one could live there, and he began to blame himself for allowing the boy to go.

He was in this mood when Jack came up like a cork. He looked like anything but a victim of drowning, for his face had a good-humored smile, but he accepted Albert's aid to regain the boat.

Shaking the water from his person, he broke the silence:

"Nice and cool, down there!"

"Did you have any adventure?"

"Adventure? No."

"I don't see how you could do so long without air to breathe."

Jack looked sharply at his friend, and then, noticing his anxious expression, broke into a laugh.

"Say, Al, you want to make a brace afore you put out yer sign as a treasure-hunter. Now, I know you ain't any coward, for I've seen ye tried afore, but you've lost yer grip in this case an' got worried. Drop it! Brace up!"

The speaker's cheerful air made Albert smile, and the latter replied:

"I guess your advice is good, but it seemed to me you were under water a long time."

"Ef you'd had a watch, it would have told you different. I didn't hurt myself that time, and I'll beat it fur time next try."

"Did you find anything?"

"Water an' rocks—nothin' more; not even a shark. Ef I git one this time, I'll bring him up by the tail as a present to you."

Nothing could dampen Jack's high spirits, and he lowered himself again as coolly as though he was bound on a mere swimming trip.

Albert was a trifle ashamed of his nervousness, and he now made an effort to appear at ease,

as well as to be so in reality. A part of the time he devoted to looking around, for it was a great object with them to avoid notice from other parties as far as possible.

If some curious meddler saw them, their secret would be in danger. To avoid this, they had risen very early, and Albert was pleased to discover that no other person was in sight.

When Jack rose again, his face was without its customary smile.

"Didn't hear me call 'Ship ahoy!' did ye?" he asked.

"No."

"I thought not; I didn't call."

"No sign of it yet, eh?"

"Not a sign. The Shark's Back is longer than I thought. It runs a good ways east an' west, when you git low down, though I always thought it tolerably short. I have an idee less on't shows above water than there did when Shubal Gaylor come ter grief here. Reckon the lay o' the land has changed some. Prob'ly the water runs higher, an' it may be that sand has packed in an' kivered the ship."

"That's bad."

"Can't be helped."

"What is to be done?"

"Keep up the search. Ef the ship is thar, she's ter be found ef we have patience."

"I'm afraid she has all decayed."

"I don't think it!" returned Jack, with the firmness that one repels an unwelcome theory.

"All ready; I'm goin' down."

"So am I!"

"How so?"

"I'm going to do my share. I'm not going to sit here in idleness and allow you to do all the labor."

Jack made a faint remonstrance, but, Albert gave no heed to it. He flung off his clothing, and after Jack had more fully explained the result of his work up to that point, they went down together.

Albert was a skillful swimmer, and able to remain under water as long as the average person and as he went down with the recollection in his mind that he was seeking for treasure, he felt an exhilaration he had never before experienced.

His course was to the west, and when he had gained some idea of where the ledge was, he proceeded to cover as much ground as was possible in a given time, and use his eyes faithfully.

He was skurrying along near the bottom when something suddenly attracted his attention. The ledge had points and spurs, but this did not look like any of them, but more like a mound of sand with a top-piece.

Albert remembered what Jack had said, but air now became a necessity, and he rose to the surface.

Jack was not to be seen, but, just as Albert had prepared for a new trial, he saw his friend appear. Waiting only to make a signal, Albert went down a second time. He did not care to exchange any words, for what he had seen had awakened possibilities in his mind which excited him, and he did not want to be laughed at again.

Descending skillfully he sought the object which had interested him. When he reached it he could see only a sort of knoll, but his plans were formed, and he began to dig at the little mound rapidly with his hands, the sand giving way rapidly.

Fortune was favoring him at last, and only a few motions had been made when his hands encountered a hard substance. He gave another scoop; more sand fell away; and he had in his grasp a stationary object not to be mistaken.

It was a part of a vessel's hull!

By this time air became necessary, and he waited for no more. Rising quickly to the surface he found that he was none too soon, and had tried his powers of endurance a good deal, but he drew in a few breaths of air and was all right again.

He saw Jack sitting in the boat, and, swimming that way, was helped in.

"Say," Jack exclaimed, "what hev you seen?"

"How do you know I've seen anything?"

"I kin tell by your face."

"You're not blind, Jack, are you? Well, I have found something."

"What?"

"The wreck of of a vessel."

"Hi! that so? What is she?"

"I don't know, for it is all covered over with sand, but it is very old, indeed."

"You don't say so! Tell me all about it."

Albert obeyed, and the impulsive Jack-o'-Lantern was thrown into a momentary fever of excitement. He soon recovered, but his san-

guine nature refused to accept more than one explanation of the case.

"It's the old pirate ship, sure as you live!" he declared, "an' it's only a matter of time when we shall have the treasure all ter ourselves. I'll go down an' see it."

He sprung out of the boat and quickly disappeared from sight. Albert sat waiting quietly, and Jack soon returned.

"It's her!" he announced. "I seen the name on the hull—'The Flying Feather!'"

"Surely, the name cannot have endured the action of the waves all these years."

"Yes, it has, an' it will keep endurin' fur some time ter come. Old Cap'n Chubbock was as stubborn on this head as on other p'int, I guess, fur the letters o' the name are of some sort o' metal, wal fastened on. Yes, sirree, we've found the old pirates' vessel, sure pop!"

The boys regarded each other in natural excitement.

"We'll be rich as Jews!" added Jack-o'-Lantern.

"If we git the treasure."

"If we git it! Why, we're bound ter git it. You bet! Al, we'll gobble the treasure or bu'st in tryin'. Yes, sir!"

CHAPTER V.

BAD NEWS FROM THE VILLAGE.

By this time the sun was up and shining brightly, and the sight of a man on the beach east of Jack's property caused the boys to raise the anchor and start for shore. This they soon reached, and they were about to go to the house when the man hailed them.

They stopped, and he came along at a rapid walk.

"How's fishing?" he asked, as he neared them.

"Poor," coolly replied Jack.

"What did you get?"

"Not a fish."

"That is bad luck for such an expert as you. Got left entirely, did you?"

"If you kin find a fish, you're welcome to it."

Jack-o'-Lantern answered as frankly as though he had really been fishing. Ordinarily he was proud of his ability to hook the finny dwellers of the deep, but now he cared nothing for his reputation in that line; he was willing the man should think he had scored a failure when, really, he believed he had made "a good catch."

Not yet was he willing any one should know what kind of "fish" he was after by the Shark's Back.

"Have you heard the news?" pursued the man.

"What news?"

"About old Barker Grainsleck."

"What about him?"

"Somebody has given him a hurt he may never get over."

Jack started. He had not forgotten the scene near Sam Dick's gate.

"What's up?" the boy asked.

"Assault and battery, which may prove murder!"

"No!"

"Yes."

"To Grainsleck?"

"Exactly."

"Who did it?"

"Just what we all want to know. The old man was found lying unconscious beside of Sam Dick's gate at a late hour last night—about midnight, I guess. He'd run afoul of somebody, or something, and got the worst of it. Had a black eye, and on his head a wound which came near doing him up forever. I'm afraid his skull was fractured; anyhow, he hadn't regained his senses at last accounts, and he has a tough chance to pull through. As long as he can't tell who hit him we are all in the dark."

The speaker did not seem to be very much grieved, and as he employed a portion of his time in looking off upon the ocean, Jack and Albert had a chance to exchange glances.

What they had seen and heard the previous evening became very significant, and the quarrel between the miser and Allan Dix assumed new and ominous importance.

Albert did not feel inclined to take part in the conversation, and if he had, Jack's gesture to call for silence on that one point would have been obeyed.

"Ain't there some idee who did it?" Jack asked.

"Well—no-o-o," was the hesitating reply.

"Could it have been a tramp?"

"No."

"Some hev been 'round."

"Yes; but if a tramp had done it, he would have robbed Grainsleck, and the old man's watch and money were not touched."

"What was he doin' at Sam Dick's gate at sech a late hour?"

"We don't know. 'Tisn't easy to account for the old miser's movements at any time. If he can squeeze a few nickels out of anybody, he will get up at dead of night and go for them."

It was plain that nobody had a good opinion of Barker Grainsleck, but this did not lead Jack into any indiscretion. If he was to tell about the quarrel he had heard it would probably be regarded as sufficient ground for Allan's arrest, and Jack's sympathies ran one way strongly enough so that he was very reluctant to speak.

Only in an extremity would he say anything to injure Allan, who had enough trouble already.

The last speaker wandered on along the beach and the boys walked toward home. Once more they exchanged a significant glance.

"Queer, ain't it?" asked Jack.

"It's worse than queer."

"I hope the miser will get well—not that I have any love for him, but ef he's ter die it would be bad fur—"

"Allan Dix!"

"We don't know Allan did it."

"You remember what we heard."

"I'm sorry ter say I do."

"Shall we tell?"

"Tell who?"

"The authorities."

"Great Scott! I should say not. We'd git Allan inter a tremenjous fix."

"But isn't it our duty to tell?"

"Al Bufort, what are ye talkin' about? Do you s'pose I'd go ag'in' him, an' for sech a man as Barker Grainsleck?" demanded Jack warmly.

"I recognize the force of all you say, but murder is a serious thing, and, bad as the miser may be, Dix is just as bad, or worse, if he has done this deed. He is a young man; Grainsleck is an old man. Besides, nothing can excuse a person who takes the life of another human being, unless he does it in self-defense. Far be it from me to appear as Grainsleck's friend, but we all have certain demands made upon us in cases like this."

"You argue like a lawyer, an' I don't pretend ter be one," returned Jack, somewhat sulkily; "an' I'll yield a pint ter you. Justice ought ter be done, I s'pose, an' I won't say we will not tell in any case, but I do say—we ain't goin' ter be so hot-headed as ter up an' tell until we know the merits o' the case."

"Of course not."

"Suspicion will travel fast enough, anyhow, an' I dare say when the man on the beach hesitated in his answer, when I axed him if there was any idee who did it, that he had Allan in mind; but we needn't feed the fire until we are sure we have some fuel."

"True."

"Therefore, we'll go slow."

"Agreed."

"I can't believe Allan would do it!" burst out Jack, abruptly.

"I don't know him, but for your sake I'll put my sympathies where yours are. Bad as it looks, we'll regard Dix as innocent until we can't look at it that way."

"Now you talk business."

"I want to be just."

Albert spoke gravely, and the case seemed to demand gravity. If Grainsleck was fatally hurt it was a matter not to be dismissed lightly, bad though the miser might be; and Albert could not be oblivious to Allan's words at Sam Dick's gate the previous night.

The young man had given Grainsleck serious warning that he was pressing him too far, while the miser had persisted in irritating him.

It certainly looked as though he had goaded Dix beyond endurance, and been struck down by that unfortunate man.

If Jack mentally admitted this he did not make his opinion known. He liked Allan, and proposed to stand by him as long as possible. Indeed, as he did not hold the ultra-severe views of those reared by parents like young Bufort's, it was not certain but that he would refuse to bear testimony against Allan in any case.

The assault upon Grainsleck furnished a source of interest too great to be disregarded, and it was agreed that both boys should go to the village as soon as breakfast was eaten.

That meal proved to be all ready for them when they reached the house, and it was soon dispatched. This done they went to the village.

Barker Grainsleck, the richest man in town, lived in one of the poorest houses. His only relative was a sister, who was of a nature like

his, and if they had been almost beggars, they would not have lived any plainer.

To this mean old house Grainsleck had been carried as soon as found, and though the doctor would allow no one to cross the threshold who was not absolutely needed, a crowd had collected not far from the building.

Jack suggested to Albert that they mix with the crowd and hear what they could, and this they proceeded to do.

Conversation was going on briskly, and Jack soon heard something of interest.

"I ain't got any sympathy to waste on old Grainsleck!" declared a red-faced, nautical-looking man. "He an' his money hev been a curse to this town. You all know how he robbed me of my house. I's big enough fool ter borry from him, an' when he foreclosed on the mortgage it was rank. I could 'a' paid him an' saved myself ef he'd given me jest one month's time, but that wa'n't his way. He foreclosed, an' robbed me o' my home, an' ruined me; an' that's the way he's served every one else he could. Let the old scamp go under, ef he will, an' good reddance."

"We sha'n't find his sister any easier in money matters," some one replied.

"She can't last a great while."

"Wonder who's the next heir?"

"I don't know. Nobody 'round here."

"I hope the old man will pull through," put in another speaker.

"You have no call ter be his friend."

"I am not his friend; but if he goes under, some one must suffer."

"Ef he's ketch'd."

"I'm afraid that'll be only too easy."

"I sha'n't help."

"Nor I," said several persons, in chorus.

"Allan Dix is worth twenty of old Barker."

"Softly! We don't want to use Allan's name around here."

"I don't believe Allan ever touched him."

"Pete Clayson saw them meet at Sam Dick's gate."

"That ain't any sign Allan touched him."

"Nor even that they quarreled."

"Look here, friends," put in the red-faced man; "we want ter be careful how we use Allan's name. We are the boy's friends, but all in town ain't that. Barker's money has bought up some nen, body an' boots, an' they have learned his meanness. Keep still, mess-mates, or idle talk will grow an' it will soon be said that we suspect Dix."

"We all know you do."

The last words were uttered by a new voice, and the nautical-looking man and his friends turned quickly.

A man upon whom they had not counted had put in an appearance—a man better dressed than they—and he stood just outside the group, regarding them with a sort of sneering smile.

"What hev you ter do about it?" demanded the fisherman, hotly.

"I have this to do," was the icy reply. "My own suspicions have run in the same channel with yours, and I am glad to find them confirmed. Allan Dix stands a poor chance when his own friends condemn him!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE SHERIFF KEEPS WATCH.

JACOB BREM, the fisherman, looked at the last speaker, and his bronzed face assumed a redder hue. He knew the man well, and knew that he was one of Parker Grainsleck's own kind. He had been reared in the village, and though he had somewhat of a reputation as a "smart" business man, he was far from popular, as he had a habit of driving sharp bargains at the expense of veracity and honor.

He was named Preston, and was the same man who visited Jonas Amesbury the previous night.

Brem instinctively doubled his fists, and his face assumed a threatening expression.

"What have you got to do about it?" he demanded, roughly.

"As much as you."

"What do you mean?"

"That I am as free to speak as any one."

"You may give your own opinions, but don't ye put any into my mouth!" the fisherman ordered, menacingly.

"I heard your opinions."

"You didn't!"

"You said that you thought it was young Dix who assaulted Grainsleck."

"You lie!" hotly answered Brem.

"Your remarks tended that way."

"Nothin' o' the sort. You heard cross-eyed, Mister Preston, an' you want ter be a bit careful how you put up meanings fur me."

"Don't dodge, Bream."

"I'll give you a chance to dodge, ef you don't dry up!" cried the fisherman, as he advanced a few steps toward the man he hated.

Preston heard him with a cold sneer, for he was by no means a timid man, but Bream's friends prevented trouble by restraining their impetuous comrade. He was too angry to think coolly, but they knew that if he aroused Preston's anger further, it would only result in making matters worse for Allan Dix.

As the case then stood there was a possibility that Preston might refrain from coming to the front to spread seeds of trouble, but once let his revengeful temper be stirred up and he was mean enough to poison the public mind against Allan, let the evidence be what it might.

It was well known that he and Allan were rival suitors for the hand of Sylvira, the ward of Jonas Amesbury.

These efforts were successful so far as immediate trouble was concerned, but when Preston saw that Bream was to be restrained he turned away with a cold sneer on his face which boded no good.

Those who saw it were more than ever of the opinion that Preston was a dangerous man.

Jack-o'-Lantern approached Albert.

"You see how it's goin'," he observed.

"Yes."

"Allan is suspected."

"Even by his friends."

"I don't believe it."

Jack spoke stoutly, and all the more so because he was well aware that all the probabilities of the case were against him. It certainly looked as though Allan had yielded to Barker Grainsleck's abusive taunts and struck a blow for which he could not but be sorry in his calmer moments.

Allan was a gentleman, and he could not approve of rough work in his own case, any more than in that of others.

"I hope he's innocent," Albert agreed.

"You know you agreed ter think him so."

"Then I will."

Albert smiled faintly as he spoke. He admired Jack's loyalty, and hoped it would all come out well, and Preston had served to prejudice him against the other side of the case. In degree as Preston had been offensive, Albert had been made an adherent of the suspected man's cause.

The boys found it hard to get trustworthy information as to Grainsleck's condition. One report said that he had recovered consciousness, but was unable to tell who assaulted him; while another rumor had it that the miser still lay insensible.

Albert suggested to Jack that the lack of reliable tidings might indicate some stir on the part of the authorities which they wished to cover by keeping the people ignorant.

After a time, as news was still lacking, the crowd broke up and wandered away in various directions; and the boys decided to walk to Sam Dick's gate, on a trip of investigation.

It was not far to that place, but there was little to reward them when they arrived. The place was deserted, for other curious observers seemed to have satisfied themselves and gone, and only grim silence met them.

Jack had entertained some idea of looking for footprints, but the crowd that had been ahead of them had obliterated all of the original signs, and there was absolutely nothing of unusual interest.

The road was as usual; and so was the small wood to the west; and so was Sam Dick's gate and everything else; and the big red barn on the hill looked down at them with its usual stare. Besides the "Sam Dick" house, no buildings were very near. To the north two white houses were dimly visible among the trees; the residences of farmers named Thomas and Wallace, respectively; while there was none to the south until the lane which led to Bowles's farmhouse was passed.

The vicinity was lonely enough, yet, as it was beside the traveled road, scarcely the one to fill the common idea of a place of crime.

Jack and Albert returned to the village, and the former suggested that they walk past Allan's place of business and see if he was keeping open as usual.

When they came in sight of the store they saw that the door was closed and the curtains down. This was an ominous sign, for it indicated something wrong with Allan Dix. Never before since he went into business had he closed the place at that hour on a week day.

No sign of life was to be seen about the premises.

Jack suddenly touched Albert's arm.

"The sheriff is comin'," he said. "Step in here!"

The place indicated was a horse-shed, and they at once made themselves invisible, but Jack was eager to keep watch, and did so.

His gaze was on the sheriff, and he eyed the man suspiciously.

The officer came on, and a casual analysis of his manner would have indicated that he had no interest in his surroundings. Jack, however, was too suspicious to take that view of the case, and he soon found his ideas confirmed. As the sheriff went on he did not once turn his face toward the store, but the boys' favorable position enabled them to note one fact.

His eyes turned, if his head did not, and he watched the store about as keenly as a cat would watch a mouse. He went on, however, and, not once looking behind him, passed up the street.

Jack nudged his companion.

"Did ye see?" he asked.

"The sheriff seems to be watching the house, don't he?" Albert returned.

"Yes. They're makin' sure Allan don't git away, I'll bet. He lives over the store, an' ef he's in, they mean to keep him there."

"Probably you are right."

"Say, Al, I've got an idee."

"What is it?"

"I'm goin' in ter tell Allan!"

Albert moved uneasily. This idea was not in keeping with his wishes, for he did not want to become mixed up with the case in any way, but he had already had a sample of his impetuous ally's strong will, and he doubted his ability to oppose him successfully.

Jack walked forward.

"Come on!" he directed; "we'll go in the back way."

Albert followed reluctantly, and was led to the rear door. Jack tried it, expecting to find it fastened, but it yielded to his touch, and he entered without knocking. The second boy followed.

Beyond the door was an entry, but the opening of a second door brought them into a room known as the "back store." It was filled with a collection of odds and ends, and was in considerable confusion, but everything else passed unheeded as the intruders saw Allan Dix seated at a table.

He was a young man of prepossessing appearance, well-formed and manly; but on that occasion he was in a state of disorder equal to that of the old curiosity shop where he was laboring. His coat was thrown off; his hair was in a disheveled state; and he was poring over a heap of papers while a gloomy frown was on his face.

He did not at first hear or see the boys, but as he became aware that he was no longer alone, he started up with an air of impatience and anger.

At sight of Jack-o'-Lantern his countenance cleared somewhat, but he turned an unfriendly regard upon Albert.

"He's a friend o' mine," Jack hastened to say.

"Hope we don't intrude, Mr. Dix."

"I am busy, Jack," Allen admitted.

"We're come on business."

"I have nothing to sell."

Dix spoke bitterly, but Jack did not heed him.

"You've heard about Grainsleck, o' course?"

"What about the old rascal?"

The question was an angry, impatient one, and Jack opened his eyes widely.

"Haven't you heard he's 'most murdered?"

Allan looked at him with sudden attention.

"Grainsleck murdered?"

"Next door to it; he may die."

"How did it happen?"

Dix showed a small degree of interest, but no sympathy.

"Somebody hit him for keeps last night, an' now the doctors are workin' over him, tryin' ter save his life. Ain't you heard of it?"

"No. No doubt they will work hard to save such a precious article as *his* life. Where did it happen?"

"At Sam Dick's gate."

Dix turned suddenly and looked more directly at the speaker, as though he was at last fully interested. His lips parted and he seemed about to speak, but whatever he had in his mind remained unsaid. After a pause he replied:

"This is news to me. Who assaulted him?"

"That's why we came," returned Jack with some embarrassment.

"How so?"

"There are them who use *your* name."

"I don't understand."

"They think mebbe *you* assaulted Grainsleck!" Jack explained, bluntly.

"Nonsense!"

"I know 'tis, an' I've told Albert Bufort so, but all on 'em don't know you so well as I do."

"And they really couple my name with the deed?"

"Yes."

"It is a rank libel, but I'm not so sure I could convince the public. This may mean fresh trouble for me."

CHAPTER VII.

JACK ENTERS STRANGE QUARTERS.

ALLAN DIX frowned and looked troubled.

"I hope you kin prove an *alibi*," Jack observed.

"It might be hard, for I was alone here last night. That is—"

Allan suddenly caught himself and looked sharply at Albert Bufort. He had made an admission which might cause him trouble if it went abroad. Jack read his glance aright.

"You needn't be afraid of Al, Mr. Dix. He's my friend, an' he won't say a word ter injure another friend o' mine—meanin' you."

"That's a fact; not a word will I say."

It was Albert who spoke, and his manner was quite emphatic. He liked Dix's looks, and had in a very short time been made his strong friend. No evidence had been given to show that the young man was innocent, but Albert went over to his side with boyish impulsiveness.

"Thank you, my friend," Allan answered.

"The law is a queer thing, and innocent men are not always safe—if they were, I should not need your aid. As it is, please don't say that I spoke of staying here alone."

"We won't even say we've seen you!" declared Jack, loyally.

"Then you had better go away at once. Don't regard this as a dismissal of the ordinary kind, for it is not so intended; but if you remain here it will soon become known, I fear."

"That's a fact, fur Sheriff Pierce is watchin' you now."

Allan made a start.

"Watching me?" he cried.

"I mean that he has an eye on the house," explained Jack, who thereupon told all that they knew.

Dix listened attentively, and again thanked them for their discretion, after which Jack arose to go. Albert, however, had seen something among the other odds and ends of the shop which interested him. It was a concern made of rubber, and shaped some like a man, but, evidently, hollow.

"May I ask what that is?" he inquired.

"A diver's suit."

"How's that?" Jack quickly demanded.

"A rubber suit used by divers who go down under water to work upon sunken vessels, or anything of that sort."

Jack and Albert exchanged glances. The statement brought the old pirates' treasure vividly to mind and excited new hopes in their minds. They had wished for a diver's suit, and here was one at hand.

"Say, what 'll you take for that?" Jack asked.

"Do you really want it?"

"Yes."

"Then take it along. It is old and nearly worn out, and not worth much. A diver presented it to me, and I had it exposed for sale for several weeks, but nobody wanted it. It is of no value to me, and if you can get any pleasure out of it, take it along. I shall be glad to repay your friendly service to me."

"We may be able ter pay you better for it, some time."

"Don't mention it."

Dix glanced toward his papers in a way which indicated that the diver's suit and the matter of the sheriff alike had but little place in his thoughts; and Jack took the hint and acted upon it.

The boys secured the rubber suit and left the rear store as cautiously as they had entered it. On regaining the cover of the shed they viewed the street as well as possible, and, finding all apparently quiet, decided to go on their way. The rubber suit had been wrapped in scout paper and would not attract attention.

The acquisition of this important article naturally turned their thoughts to the old pirates' treasure, and they were anxious to get into Jack's attic and experiment a little.

Taking the most quiet way they made their journey rapidly and were soon at their destination.

The big package excited the old housekeeper's curiosity, but they did not gratify her inquisitiveness, and it was only unwrapped when they were in the attic. The suit then became the object of their close attention, and when Jack had put it on he certainly looked outlandish enough to explore the ocean, or any other place.

It was impossible to over-estimate the importance of the new acquisition. With its aid they could explore the old wreck with ease and safety, and at their leisure. From the suit proper extended a long tube which was made to convey air to the explorer. The further end of the tube was to be left above the water, and though Albert was at first doubtful of its ability to furnish enough air for the wearer of the suit, he did not urge the point when Jack reminded him that it had already served some diver for a good many years.

They looked it over carefully and decided that it was in as good condition, comparatively, as it ever was.

Naturally, they were then anxious to make a trial trip, but it was plain that they could not work in the middle of the day with safety. Some one might see them, and though, as they were boys, their movements might be regarded as nothing more than an idle piece of sport, there certainly was danger of arousing dangerous curiosity.

Some other person might have the legend of the pirate-ship in mind.

This danger kept the boys quiet for a while, but after dinner the fever returned with new strength, and after a consultation they decided to risk everything and test the rubber suit.

Once more it was wrapped in the paper, and they bore it to the beach.

On arriving there they scanned the coast as far as they could see, but no other person was visible—not a boat was to be seen on the water.

"It's all owin' ter the stir at the village," explained Jack-o'-Lantern. "Usually, you'll see sev'ral fishermen out, but they're busy talkin' of Dix."

"Do you suppose there is anything new there?"

"I'm afeerd so."

"What?"

"I expect ter hear Dix is arrested."

"He don't look like a guilty man."

"He ain't guilty!" declared Jack, more confidently than ever.

"But you remember the talk at Sam Dick's gate."

"Don't speak on't ag'in!" cried Jack, in disgust. "I wish you wouldn't keep heavin' that at me."

"I won't," Albert agreed. "I don't want to annoy you. We'll go and get a few bushels of Shubal Gaylor's treasure right away."

The turn of subject was agreeable, and they recovered their boyish buoyancy of spirits and rowed out to the Shark's Back. Once there, they anchored as before and were ready for business.

Jack put on the rubber suit, grasped the spade with which he had provided himself, and was ready for work.

He left the boat and disappeared from view.

Albert's part in the work was by no means trivial. He had charge of the tube which was to supply the air to the water-explorer, and also held one end of a rope which was tied to Jack's waist. This was a signal-rope; the object of which was to be Jack's aid if he had trouble.

If the air-tube became tangled, or he was in any other way confronted by danger, he was to give two sharp pulls to the rope, and this would be Albert's authority to pull him to the surface as soon as possible.

On the other hand, an occasional steady, gentle pull, would indicate that he was all right.

Jack reached the wreck and a big job seemed to menace him, for he expected to find sand several feet deep on the deck, but his new impressions did not agree with those previously formed.

He found himself far more at home in the rubber suit than he had dared to expect, and he stood on the old ship's deck and looked about with an ease and freedom that was surprising, the glasses in the eye-holes of the head-piece working well.

The water was considerably clear, and though he thought of sharks, none of these dangerous customers were visible. Several fishes he did see, but they were small, and though they stared in wonder at this new creature of the ocean, they kept at a safe distance.

He soon learned the facts in regard to the position of the wreck.

The hull was almost wholly buried in sand,

and on one side, the bulwark was gone to the deck. This had deceived the boys during their former visits. Against the opposite bulwark considerable sand was piled, but over half of the deck was nearly clear. He could feel the wood under his feet, and knew that the covering of sand amounted to but little.

How vessels were made in old times he had only a vague idea, but, taking it for granted that there must be hatches somewhere, he started to find one of them.

Making his calculations systematically, he began to use the spade.

The sand proved to be next to no obstacle at all, for the coating was even thinner than he had thought, and he soon had the deck cleared enough for his purpose. He found the hatch, which was fastened down, but he soon succeeded in raising it, and the interior of the vessel was revealed to him.

He could see only a watery gulf.

This was to be expected, and he proceeded boldly to invade the long-untraveled way. The steps were visible below him, but it was a surprise when he found they would bear his weight.

All parts of the pirate ship seemed to have resisted the work of time and the water remarkably.

Leaving his spade he first gave the gentle pull to the rope to reassure Albert, and then went down to meet the next stage of his adventure. After that he would not find work so easy, for he would be in the dark, and his eyes would aid him but little to secure points of advantage, or keep out of trouble.

Perhaps, too, he might encounter a shark in that dark region. A part of the hull might be gone, and thus afford entrance to these monsters of the deep.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST CROP FROM THE PIRATE SHIP.

REACHING a level surface once more, Jack paused and looked around. He was pleased to find that he could see more than he had expected. His eyes had become accustomed to marine life, as it were, and he could distinguish his immediate surroundings without much trouble.

He was in what had probably once been the main cabin, and the regularity of its shape made it difficult to believe it had been so long under water.

He had come down with his hopes working strongly, but several troublesome questions now met him.

What if it was not the old pirate ship, after all?

What if it was some vessel which had foundered on the Shark's Back at a much more recent period?

If such was the case, good-by to all thoughts of valuable articles, money or otherwise.

"I won't think of it; I don't acknowledge that I *kin* fail!" exclaimed the boy, in his usual resolute manner; and with this decision he went on.

His first step was to search through the cabin, and this he soon did to his satisfaction. Several old pieces of furniture were still there, tipped over, and, in some cases, floating, though, as a rule, they had become saturated and heavy with water, so that they remained on the floor.

Here was, to Jack's mind, further proof of the remarkable way in which the wreck had resisted the destructive forces of time.

He had nearly completed the circuit of the cabin when he suddenly found himself face to face with an opening which he quickly recognized as a door. That it led to some other, smaller cabin was plain, and he at once entered.

There he found more confusion than elsewhere. The room was of medium size, and even in the dim light Jack could make out that it had once been richly and fantastically furnished and ornamented.

"The cap'n's cabin, by jingo!" the explorer exclaimed.

Good reason existed for this belief, and the boy paused to think of the changes time had wrought in affairs. Once, this old hulk had been a proud, fleet vessel that roved the sea under a black flag and carried a crew of robbers and murderers, while the cabin had been the quarters of the imperious leader who, no doubt, lived like a king until judgment had come to him, as it is bound to come to the evil-doer; now, all the crew had been many years dead, and the vessel was only a decaying wreck, buried under the waves it had once cut so gallantly, and the old captain's cabin was trod by the foot of a boy with impunity.

As he remembered where he was returning,

Jack half-expected to see Captain Chubbock's ghost start up and confront him; but the next moment he laughed at the foolish idea and moved forward.

The cabin was a good deal littered up, and more furniture was there than in the main cabin, but Jack worked his way through the obstructions without trouble. He had no clear idea of what he expected to do, but wished to learn all he could about the wreck.

He was still moving when his foot struck with some force against some object, the nature of which he could not understand, but it was accompanied by a sound so peculiar that he stooped to investigate.

His hands touched something like a bag, but made of metal. He held it up. It was, indeed, shaped like a bag, but he was more than ever at a loss. Something was inside; he shook it, and it gave forth a dull, rattling sound.

Jack made an impulsive start.

"Money, I bet!" he cried.

At that moment there was a distinct pull upon the rope tied around him, and he realized the fact that Albert Bufort had become uneasy. He had forgotten to signal to his friend above for some time, and this attempt to hear from him was natural.

Jack sent back a reassuring signal and turned from the cabin.

He thought he had done enough for the first trial.

Leaving the lower part of the wreck he ascended to the deck; then giving three slow, easy pulls to the rope—a signal to Albert to raise him steadily—he started for the surface. The rubber suit and his burden impeded his movements, but with Albert's aid he made the ascent safely and was soon in the boat.

Albert looked anxious, but a word from Jack reassured him.

"What in the world have you been doing?" young Bufort asked.

Jack did not answer, but held up the bag.

"And what have you got?" the previous speaker added.

"By Jinks! I don't know. Open it, Al!"

Jack cast down the bag, which fell with a clank and a jingle. It was made in small, irregular links which were so compact as to form a barrier impervious to the eyes.

"Is it money?" asked Albert eagerly.

"Open it!"

Jack did not care to hazard an opinion, and he was quite as much excited as his friend.

Albert raised the bag. The links seemed to be made of steel, and were still strong, but the lock at the upper end was deeply rusted. Here was a weak point, and Albert seized a small stone which happened to be in the boat and began to hammer upon the lock.

Two strokes were enough to make the lock break, and the bag opened, and a shower of small, flat, circular edged objects rolled out.

The boys gazed at them in dumb surprise, but Jack finally found his tongue.

"Money! Coins!" he exclaimed.

"Or medals."

"Medals! Bah! do you s'pose the pirates struck off medals?"

The speaker caught up one of the objects. The surface was covered with green mold, or some similar substance, but he fell to rubbing it on his cast-off coat with great vigor.

The surface was soon revealed.

"Hi! call that a medal, do ye?" he asked, passing it over to Albert.

"Jack, I believe that's a doubloon!"

"What's a Dublin?"

"I said doubloon, not Dublin. A doubloon is a Spanish coin, and very valuable. By George! if we have got a bag full of them we're in luck."

He ran his hand into the bag and saw that it was, indeed, filled with coins—or what appeared to be coins—of that and smaller size.

"How much is a doubloon worth?" asked Jack, eyeing the treasure raply.

"I think each one is worth about fifteen dollars."

"Great Scott! then we've got a thousand dollars."

"More than that."

"An' this is only a starter."

"Is there more?"

"Wal, I didn't see any more, but you know Shubal Gaylor's letter said there was 'great wealth' here, in coin an' bullion. We ain't got any bullion, yet."

"No."

"Shall I go down ag'in?"

"Hadn't we better take this to the attic, and look it over carefully before going further?"

"Prob'ly you're right. All correct; we'll do

it. You pull in the anchor, while I git out o' this harness. We hev found the pirates' treasure, sure pop, an' we kin gobble onter it at our leisure. This rubber business is the boss arrangement, an' I kin peramberlate down thar like a spider after a fly."

Jack was in high spirits, and he hummed a song as he cast off the diving suit.

The prospect of being rich pleased him greatly.

When their preparations had been completed Jack rowed toward the beach, while Albert wrapped the rubber suit and the bag of coins in the paper as before. No one was in sight, but they were not inclined to do away with proper precautions.

That they were wise on one point was soon proved.

As they started up the beach, a third person suddenly made his appearance. At irregular intervals small groups of bushes grew along the line where the greensward met the beach, and the person named emerged from behind one of these little thickets.

Jack recognized him at once. He was a boy a little older than the treasure-hunters, and was named Burt Moffet.

His appearance gave Jack a shock. He knew Moffet, and knew no good of him. He had always been noted as a reckless, idle, village loafer until a few weeks before, when he began to do odd jobs for Preston. This did not raise him in Jack's estimation, and the latter regarded him as a person whose room was better than his company.

"He's been spyin' on us!" Jack exclaimed.

"Yes; and now he's coming to speak to us."

"Wants ter pump us!" young Lee added, with a curl of his lip indicative of his contempt for Burt.

"I guess we shall not give him many points."

"Not a point; but I'm mighty sorry he seen us. There ain't a bigger sneak an' spy around than him, an' you kin bet his eyes have been busy."

There was time to say no more, for Moffet came up with a swagger, and with his eyes still busy, to use Jack's expression. They were bending a gaze upon the package Albert carried, as though they would bore a hole through the cover.

"Hullo, fellers!" he exclaimed.

"Hullo!" Jack briefly replied.

"Been fishin'?"

"Some."

"Ketch much?"

"Nothin' bigger than a whale."

"Ha, ha! Pooty good! Got him in that paper?"

"Mebbe so."

Jack's answers were as ungracious as they were brief, and he kept steadily on toward the house. Burt could not but see that his company was not desired, but he kept pace with them.

"What ye got, anyway?"

"Nothin' much."

"I seen you hev on a queer rig."

"Did ye?"

"Yes; an' I couldn't 'magine what 'twas."

Burt looked puzzled, and it was plain that if he had ever seen a diver's suit, he did now suspect that this was what the other boys had.

"There's lots o' things we don't know," Jack observed.

"I didn't see you fish."

"Then it didn't cost ye a cent."

"Seems ter me you stayed under water a long time."

"How so?"

"You wa'n't visible fur a long time."

"I was close ter the boat."

Jack told the truth when he said this, but it was his purpose to have a wrong inference drawn. The row-boat had been between the scene of his operations and the spy on the shore, and it followed that Burt could not see what was occurring close to the boat. Jack hoped that the reply would lead the spy astray, though he was by no means sanguine.

Burt remained suspicious and still eyed the mysterious package sharply.

"I'd like ter see what you hev there," he finally declared, bluntly.

"Where?"

"In that bundle."

"You can't see!"

They were almost at Jack's door, and he thought it was time to dispose of Moffet and let him see that his inquisitive proclivities were not going to bear any fruit. The answer was plain, and so was Jack's manner. Usually he was as cheerful, respectful and, in his way, polite as could be desired, but he did not like Burt Moffet,

and under the latter's questioning he had developed a gruffness that was far from encouraging.

Burt gave plain evidence of anger, but did not seem inclined to quarrel. The house was now reached, and Jack and Albert gave signs of going in and leaving their unwelcome companion without ceremony, but the latter had something more to say.

"Hold on! I've got some news!" he exclaimed.

"Say it quick, then."

"Somebody's arrested at the village."

"There is?"

"Yes; the sheriff has took up Allan Dix fur tryin' ter kill Barker Grainsleek!"

"He never done it!" cried Jack.

"Who did, then?"

"I don't know, but Allan ain't such a man."

"Mebbe ef you go an' tell 'em, they'll let him go," sneered Burt.

"I reckon my word will go as fur as yourn."

"I ain't a Gypsy's son!" retorted Moffet.

"An' I hope your father never'll have a son in State's Prison!"

With this retort Jack opened the door; he and Albert promptly entered; and in a moment more Burt found himself standing alone on the outside of the house.

CHAPTER IX.

BEFORE THE PRISON BARS.

NOT a word passed between Jack and Albert until they were once more in the attic. Then the former broke forth indignantly.

"It's a shame ter arrest Allan Dix!" he declared.

"He may get out of it all right."

"I'm sure he will, but it's persecution ter arrest him when he's innocent."

"We ought to have asked Moffet why they arrested him."

"Moffet! You bring that sneak back ter my mind. I wonder what he's doin'?"

They looked out of the window and saw Burt walking directly toward the water.

"He's goin' ter spy some more," Jack added.

"Do you suppose he suspects the truth?"

"No, I don't think that hardly possible, but it may be jest as bad in the end. Ef there is a mean, pryin' chap out, it's Burt Moffet; an' though, as I say, I don't think it possible he kin guess the truth now, it would be jest like him ter look inter the business."

"He may visit the wreck."

"That's a fack."

The treasure-hunters gazed at each other very gravely, but Jack's nature was too buoyant to be long cast down. He aroused and spoke briskly:

"Never mind, Al; we won't let him beat us, anyhow. Two ter one on us, an' ag'in' him, is my wager. An' now let us look at our Dublins I mean, our doubloons."

This was a more pleasant subject of thought, and they proceeded to give close attention to their trophies. The bag was emptied of its contents, and the whole damp, green-coated mass of coins scattered upon the table.

It made a sight new and fascinating to the boys' eyes, for, dull as the little flat, circular-edged pieces looked, they had seen that a little labor would improve their appearance greatly.

"It sort o' dazzles me!" Jack confessed, drawing a deep breath.

"They're a hard-looking lot now."

"Yes. What ef they ain't all of 'em good coins?"

"Trust the old pirate who put them into the bag to look out for that."

"How much money do they add up?"

"We'll try to find out. They're not all doubloons, as you can see by the size. How much the small ones are worth I don't know, and I'm not quite sure about the doubloons; though, as I said before, I think each is worth fifteen dollars, or a little over. Have you a table giving the value of foreign money?"

"No."

"Or a dictionary?"

"I've got part o' one, but it's pretty wal tore up. Most on't is gone."

Jack arose as he spoke and produced the book. It was certainly a hard-looking specimen, but Albert was pleased to see that the words beginning with the letter "d" were nearly all present, and he sought for the word of interest.

"He it is!" he announced. "Listen! 'Doubloon—a Spanish and Portuguese coin, of the value of from fifteen to nearly sixteen dollars.'"

"You was pretty nigh right. Le's count the big ones, an' see how they figger up."

Separating the coins, it was found that there were eighty-nine of the doubloons, and, as they

were willing to be modest, they figured them at the value of fifteen dollars each and obtained the result.

"One thousand, three hundred and thirty-five dollars!" Albert announced.

"Great Scott! that makes us rich!"

"Somewhere near it, Jack."

"How about the others?"

"I don't know, but I should say it was safe to calculate the whole lot at two thousand dollars."

"Ha! an' we've only begun at the wreck."

"I have an idea that what we have found may have been the captain's private stock. Of course he had more, while the total treasure of the pirate crew must mount far above this. Whether we shall find any more remains to be seen."

"Be these worth face value?"

"I don't know, but I should say they would be worth far more, in market, than that. Coins as old as these must sell at a premium."

"You dazzle me, Al; you do, by Jinks! Whew! jest think o' Jack-o'-Lantern, the coast good-for-nothin', poppin' up as a millionaire! Say, what d'ye think o' old Shubal Gaylor's paper now?"

"I'm glad you read it and acted upon it. Now, let's clean up the coins and see how they look."

Jack did not object, and the work was begun and prosecuted with zeal. One after another several of the coins were put in as good condition as their means would permit, and it was a collection which did them good when they were heaped up on the table.

It grew to be hard work long before the labor was half done, and as Jack's mind strayed to other matters, he finally ceased work.

"You know what Burt Moffet told us?" he asked.

"About Allan Dix?"

"Yes."

"I remember."

"He's back in my mind, Allan is; an' I feel as though I'd like ter go ter the village an' hear the latest news."

"Let's go, then. This job will keep."

"Unless somebody steals the money, an' I reckon I kin put a stop ter that. There's a loose board over in one corner, an' I'll put 'em in under the floor."

Albert pronounced this a good idea, and the coins were disposed of accordingly. They did not expect any person but themselves to be in the attic, and the housekeeper they knew to be perfectly honest, but it was well to be on the safe side.

This done they went to the village.

When they arrived they found that the former excitement had increased, rather than abated, and that Burt Moffet's statement that Allan Dix had been arrested was only too true.

The young man was in jail charged with the attempted murder of Barker Grainsleek.

The miser had recovered consciousness, and was in a great panic over the possible result of his injuries; but he had accounted for them with a clearness which, according to the sheriff's account, left no doubt as to the identity of the guilty person.

Grainsleek had declared that he met Allan Dix on the night of the assault at Sam Dick's gate; that Allan had asked him to give him a year's further time on the debt; that he had refused to do so; and that Allan had then given way to ungovernable rage and assaulted him.

All this was plain enough, and most of those who had before spoken so strongly for Allan had relapsed into silence which was very significant.

Only the prisoner's personal friends stood by him in his hour of adversity—they and Jack Lee.

"He never did it!" the boy asserted, addressing Albert Bufort.

The latter did not answer.

"I wouldn't b'lieve Grainsleek, nohow."

"You know what we saw and heard by Sam Dick's gate," suggested Albert, mildly.

"All chance; nothing more."

There was no such thing as moving Jack, and as Albert's sympathies were on the same side, and he admired his friend for his constancy, the latter did not try to change his belief.

While they were waiting a carriage was driven to the jail which contained two persons at whom all looked with interest, and, in almost every instance, with marked respect.

They were Jonas Amesbury and his adopted daughter, Sylvira.

It was well known that the latter was the promised wife of Allan Dix, and his friends respected her accordingly, and felt like giving her new credit when they were thus shown that she intended to stand by her lover in his trouble.

Sylvira's face was sad and troubled, and it was noticed that Mr. Amesbury trembled as though he had been suddenly stricken with palsy. The blow had been severe.

They entered the jail and found the sheriff on guard.

"How do you do, Mr. Pierce?" saluted Amesbury.

"How are ye?" was the none-too-civil reply.

"Is Allan Dix here?"

"Slightly."

"Can we see him?"

Pierce shook his head silently.

"Why not?"

"Accused persons not 'lowed to see visitors."

"Why not?"

"Preston says it's irregular."

"What has Preston to do with it?"

"Oh! he's posted."

Amesbury looked at Pierce in bewilderment, but Sylvira's dejection had been giving way to indignation, and she spoke with considerable spirit.

"Is Otis Preston sheriff of this town?" she asked.

Pierce looked offended.

"You are well aware that I fill that office, girl."

"Do you allow him to run the office and you?"

"I allow no one to do that."

"Then I don't see why you go to him for orders. If I was an officer I would not let a man like him ride over me and fill my place!"

"My dear!" remonstrated Jonas, in alarm.

"Pray say no more. I am sure Mr. Pierce will not deal harshly with a man he has known ever since he was a child—"

"You cannot see Dix!" interrupted the official, in growing anger.

"But we are his friends—"

"I know, I know; and it's no credit to you to own it. Every honest man has thrown him over since it became known what he has done."

"Allan Dix is not guilty!" Sylvira declared.

"Bah! you talk for a losing cause. Grainsleck is now conscious, and he has told all. He and Dix quarreled about money matters, and Dix struck him down and beat him like a dog."

"Mr. Pierce speaks truly," added another voice.

Sylvira turned quickly and saw Preston. He at once removed his hat with a show of politeness, but his manner lacked sincere respect.

"There is, unfortunately, no room for doubt," he added. "The wounded man is perfectly clear-headed, and he tells a story equally clear. You will have to admit that you have been mistaken in the prisoner, Miss Sylvira."

"I shall do nothing of the kind!" the girl exclaimed, her eyes sparkling. "The best proof of Allan's innocence is the fact that *you* say he is guilty!"

The spirited retort was flung at Otis Preston with emphasis which made his face flush, but he was not easily put down.

"Have your own way, willful girl!" he retorted, "but you may be sorry for it, anon. Look here!"

He advanced a pace and opened a door, and just beyond they saw a window which was crossed in two ways by strong iron bars.

"Is the sight pleasant?" Preston asked. "Are you now glad you clung to Dix? Does his future look bright? You have seen what is beyond. You are on the front of the bars, but Dix is behind them. You have refused an honest friend; perhaps you still stand up for a wretch who, if Barker Grainsleck dies, will go to the gallows!"

Preston closed the door with a bang, and the sound sent a chill to Sylvira's heart.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRICE OF SAFETY.

JONAS AMESBURY had but little of the brave spirit so prominent in Sylvira's character, and at this new proof of Preston's power, and his influence over Sheriff Pierce and Allan's present destiny, the feeble old man was so moved that his eyes filled with tears.

"Mr. Preston, I beg that you will have mercy upon the poor boy!" he exclaimed.

"Young Dix is in the hands of law," Preston stolidly replied.

"I do not understand why we can't see him."

"It would be irregular."

"How so?"

"He is incarcerated for a serious crime."

"But we are his friends."

"So much the worse. Friends are the enemies of law when a criminal is behind the bars. Aid is frequently conveyed secretly to such per-

sons, in the shape of poison to commit suicide or tools to break jail."

"Surely you do not think we would do that!" exclaimed Amesbury.

"We cannot say."

"I give my word of honor—"

"Needlessly, sir. I think I am justified in saying that you can see Dix under no circumstances."

He glanced at Pierce as he spoke, and that creature of wax replied:

"Quite right, Mr. Preston."

"This is outrageous!" Sylvira cried, her indignation once more conquering weaker emotions.

"My dear!"

It was a timid expostulation from Jonas, who had the greatest fear of Preston, and expected new trouble to rise if his anger was further aroused.

Preston looked at the sheriff and coughed meaningly, and that person discreetly retired.

"Jonas," observed the master of destiny, "Dix would have done better to go West."

"My poor boy!" sighed the old man.

"I made a good offer," pursued Preston. "I would have got him a valuable business situation in Chicago, and the only return on his part would have been his promise to never come East again, and never renew his old associations."

"Would to Heaven we were all in the West—or in a better land!"

"Don't sermonize, Jonas. Dix is young to die, or to go to prison for life."

Preston spoke musingly, but Jonas exclaimed:

"In mercy's name, sir, do not speak thus!"

"He ought to have an influential friend."

"Where can such a friend be found? What friend does the poor man have except a pitiful God?"

"Possibly I might aid the lad if—"

Preston's manner had grown more and more of a thoughtful, musing nature, and his voice died away as though the activity of his mind had silenced his tongue.

"Oh, sir, if you could save my boy I would bless you!" Amesbury fervently replied.

Sylvira's stronger mind saw only new schemes behind this sudden change, but she remained quiet.

"Do you suppose," asked Preston, "that Dix would consent to take the Chicago position?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Barker Grainsleck has an even chance to live. If he dies, of course nothing can save Dix. Should he recover, I believe I have enough influence with him to make Dix's acquittal possible. But I must have my reward."

The speaker walked to the window and looked out, to make sure no one was listening; then he turned, and fixed his gaze upon Sylvira.

"Perhaps your fair daughter can surmise what that reward must be," he added.

Amesbury's face fell. He, too, understood what was meant.

"I am human," pursued Preston, "and my heart is moved by one whose beauty and goodness might well move an iceberg. Let our fair Sylvira promise to be my wife, and I will do my best to save the boy!"

The words were out, and they brought no embarrassment to the hardened wretch who uttered them, but Sylvira's face flushed.

"Do you call yourself a man," she replied, in a low but thrilling voice, "and dare make such a proposal?"

"The marriage proposal of an honest man," Preston stolidly answered.

"It is a libel on the word!"

"Call it what you will; we will not quarrel over terms. I think you understand me clearly. Dix is to leave here permanently, take a good situation—to be supplied by me—in Chicago, and remain there, while you are to abandon all thought of him and marry me. I shall insist upon having the ceremony performed early enough to make sure there is no failure."

"It is a question in my mind," answered Sylvira, in a voice which suppressed feeling rendered low and unnatural, "whether you realize the enormity of your proposition. I cannot understand how any human being can so coolly explain himself on such a point."

"We will pass over that. Do you accept or decline?"

"Most emphatically, I decline!"

"Be not hasty."

"I am not hasty."

"Perhaps a little time to think—"

"It is not necessary."

"Then you will leave Dix to his fate?"

"I leave him to the mercy of Providence."

Preston shrugged his shoulders.

"I would as soon trust a tiger."

"It would be as well for you to do so. The mercy of Providence is not for men like you."

The assertion passed unnoticed.

"I am not disposed to accept a rash decision," Preston returned, "and I will give you twenty-four hours to think it over. By that time we may be able to tell whether Grainsleck will recover, and you will have had time to decide whether you will save Dix."

Sylvira ignored all this.

"Do you still refuse to let us see him?"

"Yes."

"By what authority?"

"That of the sheriff. You have asked him and been refused."

Preston stepped to the door, and Pierce re-entered.

"I shall have to ask you to go away now," he said firmly. "You cannot see the prisoner, nor can I keep any one here."

He motioned to the door, and Sylvira pressed her adopted father's arm to prevent further talk. She started for the door, and, with Amesbury, went out in silence. Their expression told a story of some sort of disappointment to the waiting crowd, and one of that number made himself spokesman and, while they were entering the vehicle, learned that admission had been refused them.

This news quickly spread, and it served to increase the ill-feeling against the prosecution. One man observed that if they were not law-abiding citizens he should counsel an attack on the jail, and his sentiments were generally echoed.

Their devotion to the interest of law and order was being severely tried.

In the meanwhile Amesbury and Sylvira were driving home. Little was said on the way, but their hearts were full. On their arrival they had a task even more painful to perform—to tell Mrs. Amesbury how critical was the situation.

It was a house of mourning, in which there was not a doubt of Allan's innocence. How he had become entangled in the web of evidence against him they did not know, but the blame was laid at Otis Preston's door.

For months the man had been a cloud that threatened the happiness of all. His fancy for Sylvira, and his refusal to accept a rejection at her hands, had worried them all along, and events had gone in a channel, like a boat passing down a river, while the water grew rougher, metaphorically speaking, and they neared the rapids which were now so close at hand.

And each step of the way had been darkened by the presence, or influence of Otis Preston.

Sylvira retired to her room, leaving the aged couple awhile alone. They were nearly heart-broken. Their adopted daughter and their nephew had been like own children to them, and it had been their dearest hope to have the young people marry, but hope seemed to have vanished forever.

Once more Sylvira proved her courage, and when she rejoined them, she was far calmer and more cheerful than was to be expected. She had encouraging words for them, and she so worked upon their age-affected minds, that they retired for the night with a degree of faith.

After all, justice might triumph.

Sylvira did not feel what she advocated. She had no confidence in the plan of trusting blindly to luck, and for a long while she lay upon a sleepless bed, trying to see her way clear to aid Allan.

The poverty of the parties most intimately concerned stood as a barrier to the only effort she could think of to clear Allan, and that was to get a first-class detective from New York.

This seemed out of the question to her, and it was all the more annoying because, believing in Allan's innocence, she felt that earnest, skillful endeavor might serve to clear him of all charges.

Had she been a man she would have taken the work upon herself, but, as she was not, she tried to think of some one who had the natural gifts to act as an amateur detective.

She fell asleep with the question unsettled.

Sleeping, she dreamed, and she thought she was herself in a prison cell, and that a rat was gnawing his way into the place. He was not visible, but she could hear his sharp teeth working, and the sound made her so nervous that she finally awoke.

It was a partial relief to find she had been dreaming, but her thoughts flashed to Allan and consciousness brought little pleasure.

Then there was a turn of events.

Upon her ear fell a sound like what she had dreamed of—like, and yet not wholly similar to the gnawing of a rat.

She was at once interested. The noise seemed to be in the next room, but neither rats nor mice infested the house, and she was at a loss to account for it.

Steadily the sound continued, and the idea suddenly occurred to her that Mr. Amesbury, unable to sleep, had risen in the middle of the night.

This was enough to bring her to her feet. She knew that he lacked the physical and mental strength to endure as younger persons could. She quickly threw on her wrapper and, without striking a light, started for the chamber door.

Some impulse led her to open it softly, and she had no sooner done so, than she was glad she had been so cautious.

Some one was in the next room, but it was not Mr. Amesbury; a light was burning there, but it was not that of any lamp belonging to the house.

The only light came from a bull's-eye lantern, and it revealed an unknown man, who wore a mask which wholly concealed his face.

CHAPTER XI.

THE THIEF AT NIGHT.

SYLVIRA stood in startled silence. She knew that this nocturnal visitor could not be accounted for in any natural way. No person besides Mr. Amesbury and his wife had the right to be there, and the occupation of the man settled any doubts that might have been in Sylvira's mind.

Mr. Amesbury had a desk which was a relic of "better days," and one which differed from most desks in that it had a strong lock.

The masked man was trying to open this desk.

The obstinacy of the lock, and, perhaps, the tools with which he worked, were against him, and he did not find the task easy. His efforts to force back the bolt made the noise which had attracted the girl's attention.

Sylvira remained motionless. After the first shock she did not feel that degree of fear which would have assailed most of her sex, for hers was a brave nature, but she did not know how to proceed.

Something must be done, for it was plain the man was a robber. There was not much in the house to steal, but they could not afford to lose anything; and besides, he might end his work with a crime worse than robbery.

One strong man could slay the three weak inmates of the house.

The situation was rendered critical by the fact that the robber was between her and the Amesburys. She could not go to them without passing him, and as she could not pass without being discovered, this was out of the question.

She was literally thrown upon her own resources.

Minutes wore on and the masked man continued his work, unconscious of the fact that he was under watch. Sylvira stood passive and tried to think of a way to act. She had the courage to confront him with a revolver—but she had not the revolver. There was absolutely no weapon in her possession.

What was to be done?

Various expedients occurred to her, but not one was satisfactory.

Chance finally settled the question.

The robber had been losing his temper steadily on account of his ill-luck, and he suddenly raised his head with an irritable exclamation.

The result was unavoidable.

He caught sight of Sylvira, and the discovery seemed to fill him with consternation. Some object which he held in his hand fell clattering to the floor, and he was as much dumfounded as though he had run upon a night robber himself.

This lasted for only a moment. He made a clutch for his lantern, and in a moment more the slide was turned off and the room left in darkness.

Sylvira started back, expecting an attack, and, indeed, the footsteps of the man were to be heard, but she was in no danger. The faint light to be seen at the window was abruptly shut off, and then, as it showed again, the sound of a fall was to be heard outside, and the man was gone!

He had leaped from the window, and the girl heard rapid footsteps as he rushed away at full speed.

She hurried to the window. She could see

him receding at a distance, but it was too late to give the alarm. No one else was visible, and no one was likely to be astir.

Sylvira turned away from the window. Her first impulse was to arouse her adopted parents, but her final decision was in keeping with her character. She reflected that the danger was over, and that Jonas and his wife might be sleeping peacefully.

She decided not to arouse them.

It would be folly to pursue the robber, and they could do no good.

Instead, she found and lighted her own lamp, and then proceeded to survey the room where the robber had worked. She did not believe he had entered any other room in the house.

Almost the first thing she saw was the object he had dropped. It proved to be a bottle of oil, and a quantity smeared upon the lock of the desk showed that he had brought it to deaden the sounds and make the bolt work easier.

He had had his labor for nothing, for the lock had resisted all his efforts.

Sylvira made a careful search, but nowhere else in the room could she find trace of his work. A dollar bill lay upon the clock-shelf, and just above it hung Amesbury's gold watch. This was old and worn, and would no longer act its destined part, but the gold case was certainly worth something.

The presence of these articles suggested a fact of no small importance to her mind.

The robber had not come in search of money.

What then had been his object?

Her gaze turned to the desk. The answer was there. He had desired something which he knew, or believed, to be there. This was very suggestive, though it left her more in the dark than ever. In a general way, she knew very well what the desk contained. There were many papers which had bearing upon Mr. Amesbury's former business life, and a large lot of accumulated letters—and that was all.

As far as she knew, there was nothing in the desk which was of value to any one but Mr. Amesbury, and, perhaps, they were of no real value to him.

Why, then, had the robber been so anxious to open the desk? Why had he left the money and watch untouched, and made such a determined effort on something that would not yield him anything of financial value?—or, as far as she could see, of value in any way.

Here was a mystery, and she tried in vain to solve it. Convinced that he had known what he was about, and had been working with a clear purpose, she tried to imagine what that purpose could be.

The attempt was a failure.

Later, she gave attention once more to the bottle of oil. The bottle was of the ordinary kind, and was without a label, but it interested her a good deal. It was the one clue left by the robber, and smaller things than that had before then led to the detection of an evil-doer.

It was then only two o'clock, and Sylvira determined to not only secure more sleep, but baffle the unknown, if he should return; so she moved the desk to her own room—a task by no means easy—and set the bottle of oil upon it.

This done, she locked the door, left the light burning low and retired.

She did not expect further trouble, but if it came, she was as well prepared as possible.

The remainder of the night passed quietly, and when she arose there was nothing to tell of the nocturnal visit, and the Amesburys had nothing to reveal.

Sylvira waited until after breakfast, and then opened the subject. Her first questions were in regard to the contents of the desk, and she found her own opinion verified. Jonas stated that it contained nothing of practical value. Some of the letters therein he did value, because they brought up pleasant recollections of the past, and the business papers he saved from habit.

Further than that, the contents of the desk might be burned, and no one would be injured or benefited.

When this point had been established, Sylvira told of the night visitor. Jonas and his wife were surprised and alarmed, but the latter feeling soon gave place to perplexity when she had presented the case in the light, or want of light, it had to her.

"A robber, yet he didn't take the money!"

uttered Amesbury, thoughtfully.

"He came for something else."

"What could it have been?"

"Something in the desk."

"But there is nothing there worth taking."

"I doubt it."

"Then why did he try to open the desk?"

"He may not have known how valueless the contents were, and expected something."

"Yet he left the money that was plainly visible."

This reply overturned the old gentleman's theory, and he found himself wholly at loss.

"Who knows what you keep in the desk?" continued Sylvira.

"Nobody but Allan—that is, except in a general way. All the neighbors know vaguely what I have there."

"It was one of them tried to rob you!"

"It was?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I know it intuitively, and, furthermore, I am sure it meant a new attack upon Allan!"

Amesbury looked at the girl in wonder.

"How could that be?"

"I don't know, but I feel sure of what I say."

"You must have a logical reason, I suppose," replied Jonas smiling faintly.

"No; I must confess that I have none, yet I feel sure of what I say. It was a new effort to injure Allan."

"But how could they do it?"

"I don't know; and if you can think of nothing, we may as well let it rest at that. There is something more important to do. We must find the robber!"

"How can that be done?"

"The one clue is the bottle he left."

"You think we can learn whose it was, eh?"

"We must try."

"I am afraid we should make sorry work acting as detectives."

"We must get a more capable person. We cannot hire a regular detective, for we have no money with which to pay him. Can you suggest any one here?"

"It would need a sharp man."

"True. Nothing less would do."

"I don't know where we shall find him."

"Still, it must be done; we must know who the robber was. If this is done, it may throw some light on the plot against Allan."

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER DIVER APPEARS.

JACK-O'-LANTERN and Albert Bufort had planned to be early at the old wreck that morning, and renew their work, but they overslept somewhat, and it was broad daylight when the former awoke.

He aroused Albert, and then leaped out of bed.

"We've got to be up an' hustlin'," he declared; and he began to throw on his clothes.

"Fish and private treasure bite best early in the day," jocosely answered Albert, as he followed Jack's example.

"An' ef we fish too late, other men may drop a hook for our pet fish."

"Lucky they don't possess Shubal Gaylor's paper, to use for bait."

With these light observations the boys finished dressing, and then Jack went to the window. He had barely done this when he uttered a sharp exclamation.

"What's up?" Albert asked.

"Come here!"

Albert obeyed. Jack was pointing, and the direction of his finger was toward a well-known place. His young ally looked, and what he saw startled him.

A boat was anchored directly above the Shark's Back!

While the boys looked a human head appeared above the water, and then its owner clambered into the boat.

"Some one is after the treasure!" Albert cried.

"Yes."

"By my life, that's bad!"

"D'ye know who he is?"

"No."

"I do, an' I ain't s'prised ter see him there. That's our old friend, Burt Moffet!"

"Then he's after the treasure, sure."

"He's pryin' round there ter see what we was after, an' he's a mighty dangerous chap. Yes, he's after our secret, an' we are after him."

Jack threw on his hat as he spoke and started for the door, and Albert promptly followed. Their first impulse was to run toward the beach at full speed and take Burt to task, but second thought showed them that this would be the best of proof that they had reason to fear his presence there.

He was sitting in his boat, and as he did not seem to have anything to occupy his time, the chances were he had thus far made no great discovery.

Plainly, the wisest way was to proceed with moderation.

They walked toward the beach, and Burt was not long in discovering them.

When he did this he showed some irresolution, but finally pulled up his anchor, dipped his oars and began pulling away. They were not near enough to interview him, unless they hailed and stopped him, and as they had no desire to do that, he was allowed to go.

He seemed to take great care not to seem in a hurry, and dipped the oars quite slowly, but when they were in the water he pulled with a force which showed a strong inclination to escape without closer contact with the other boys.

Outwardly, they ignored him, but by the time they reached the water their plans were formed. Anxious, if possible, not to have him think they were eager to drive him away, they deliberately entered their own boat and pulled from shore.

"No treasure-huntin', ter-day," observed Jack.

"That fellow may leave for good."

"He will stay for bad!" Jack retorted. "You don't ketch him actin' the manly part. I don't b'lieve he's found out our secret—though he may have diskivered there's a wreck down by the Shark's Back—an' now he'll hover nigh enough ter watch us."

"That's bad."

"Bad fur treasure-huntin'."

"Can't we do something?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"When I see Burt Moffet, I kin thrash him like all creation."

"That wouldn't reflect much credit on you."

"It would if I did him up in good shape," answered Jack, with calm and logical promptness. "I know you're ag'in scraps, but, say, what biz has that varmint ter play the sneak ag'in' us?"

Albert had to smile at his friend's matter-of-fact way, and he did not try further to change his belief.

They reached the eastern end of the Shark's Back and dropped anchor. As Jack had said, treasure-hunting was out of the question while Moffet was near, and they kept away from the point where the old pirate ship lay under the waves. Determined to keep up appearances, they began to fish as assiduously as though their whole interest was centered in the finny inhabitants of the deep.

Burt Moffet did not disappoint Jack; he drew off to a safe distance, and then turned fisherman and began to dangle his hook with a great show of interest—as he thought.

Really, it was perfectly plain to Jack and Albert that he cared not a picayune for the fish, and the frequent furtive looks he stole at his neighbors showed that his curiosity was still working with full force.

Nothing occurred to reward him.

Jack and Albert devoted an hour to fishing, and then raised their anchor and returned to shore. By the time they had finished breakfast Burt was evidently tired of his task, and he was to be seen pulling for the distant village.

His rivals went to the attic to consult.

They had cleaned up all of the old coins, and as they had been found all right, the zeal of the boys was stronger than ever, and they were anxious to resume work on the old wreck.

"But how be we goin' ter do it?" Jack asked. "That mean critter ain't goin' ter give us our mornin's alone ter ourselves any more; he'll be on hand ter pry an' spy."

"I shall have to leave it to you to outwit him."

"I kin see only one way."

"How is that?"

"Work when he don't expect us to."

"We can't work at night."

"No."

"Then when shall we?"

"At noon. Burt has got the idee that mornin' is our fav'rite time, an' he'll be on hand as sharp as we be. Unluckily, he has jest as good right there as we hev, an' we can't keep him off by law."

"Hardly."

"I might tackle him," added Jack, with perfect candor, "an' I know I could do him up, ef he is older than me; but I ain't sure that would keep him away."

"Don't think of it, Jack. I don't want to be mixed up with any fighting, for it won't do any honor to us, and you would probably be arrested."

"Like as not."

"We want to keep on good terms with the law."

"Yes; though we don't hanker ter be on

good terms with Moffet. Now, I'll give ye my idee."

"What is it?"

"Burt won't very likely be 'round at noon ter-day, an' I move that we go out an' make another bold push. We may learn enough so we shall know what to do 'bout the case."

"I think your plan is the best. As long as we can no longer be sure of safety from observation, the sooner we strike and get what we can out of the wreck, the better. Moffet may use his tongue in the village, and bring others down upon the wreck."

"Skeercely that, fur he's a sly, secret rogue. He won't likely tell many on't, but he may git two or three o' his cronies, an' come prepared ter look the wreck over, anyhow, peace or war."

Here was a new possibility, and it troubled them not a little.

They talked the matter over freely, and were more than ever of the opinion that prompt action was necessary.

It was decided that they should let no time go to waste, and they prepared for work.

After dinner they took a look at the coast and, failing to see any one, started out on the trip. Going to the beach, they entered the boat, pulled out to the Shark's Back and anchored. Then Jack put on the rubber suit and took to the water.

Previous experience had rendered him confident, and he sought the wreck with determination and zeal. A little investigation satisfied him that if Bart had found the old ship at all, he had not made any further progress; and then Jack entered the lower part thereof.

His first step was to go to the captain's cabin, to see if any more treasure was to be found there. He was hindered by the floating objects, but these were not allowed to baffle him. Relying partly upon his eyes and partly upon his hands, he finally completed a search that satisfied him that the resources of that particular place had been exhausted.

Nothing discouraged, he started for new fields of conquest.

Somewhere in the ship must be stored the treasure referred to by Shubal Gaylor—the common stock of the old pirates.

He set out to find it.

In many ways the craft was constructed differently from vessels of his day, but as he had free access to all parts, he went on slowly, feeling his way when necessary, and examining place after place.

Strange things were encountered, but not the hoped-for coin and bullion. Point after point was subjected to search, but all to no purpose.

At last he stood once more in the main cabin. His failure had discouraged him somewhat, and he was fast arriving at the conclusion that if more treasure was there, it could be reached only by tearing the wreck entirely to pieces.

Mechanically he put out his hand and felt of the wall, and it encountered a slight recess. It was a door which had previously escaped his notice.

"Another cabin," he thought. "Mebbe old Cap'n Chubbock's mate slept here. Wonder ef he had a private treasure?"

Jack tried to open the door. It resisted his efforts, and he found that it was fastened with a ponderous padlock.

The boy at once became interested. A room secured so strongly must have contained something of importance. He began to consider how he could force the lock, and then, remembering how many years had elapsed, he tried the expedient of throwing himself against the door.

It flew from its place without hardly any resistance, and the way was clear.

Another small cabin was before him.

At first Jack thought he had found a place entirely empty, and there was no furniture there, and no sign that it had ever been used as a sleeping-room; but as he began to move about, he ran upon some low object which rapped his knees sharply. He stooped to examine it, and the result sent his blood shooting rapidly through his veins.

It was an old-fashioned chest, or box, with another heavy padlock upon it.

Considerably excited he attacked the lid, but found it out of the question to raise it. The lock resisted his efforts, and it became clear he would have to get some missile to break it. Remembering that he had before found a hatchet, he again looked it up and returned to the cabin.

A few blows shattered the lid around the lock, and he raised the former without trouble.

He thrust his hand inside, and it encountered some solid object. He gained a surer grasp,

and raised a substance the feeling of which gave him a new shock of anticipation.

He examined it quickly.

It was an extremely heavy bar of some metal, a foot long and as large as his wrist.

He stood like one dazed.

"Gold, silver or iron?" he whispered, as though there was some one to hear him.

Again he plunged his hand into the chest, and in a few moments he had established one fact. A large pile of similar bars had been packed there in an orderly way.

"Eureka!" he cried; "it's the old pirates' bullion!"

His hand was still busy, and it encountered something more. He pulled, and with some labor raised an object like the steel-link bag found in the captain's cabin, only larger and much heavier.

By that time he was too much excited to remain quiet. He was eager to get his treasures to the light and examine them with Albert Burt. Holding fast to the bag and the bar—a burden of no small weight—he retraced his steps as rapidly as possible.

Toiling through the darkness he finally reached the deck, and was all ready for the journey to the upper world.

CHAPTER XIII.

A GOOD HAUL.

HAVING some doubt of his ability to carry all his burden with him in the ascent, even with Albert's aid, Jack detached the rope from his waist and secured it to the bar and the bag. This done, he rose quickly to the surface.

His appearance without any previous signal surprised Albert, and when the latter noticed the absence of the rope he grew alarmed.

"Have you had an adventure?" he asked.

"Yes," Jack replied.

"Not with a shark?"

"Haul on the rope an' see."

As he spoke Jack, too, laid hold of the rope and the hauling was begun. A suspicion of the truth entered Albert's mind, but the idea seemed so absurd that he did not mention it.

Up came the rope and at last up with it came the burden. Jack made an effort and landed both in the bottom of the boat. The bag did not look so large as before, nor the weight appear so great as when they were pulling against the water; but there lay the two, and as the bag was so much like the smaller one before found, Albert looked at it with eyes large and round with excitement.

"Here's my shark!" quoth Jack.

"What in the world?"

Jack lifted the bag and shook it, and it gave forth a sound which had become very familiar to their ears.

"Great Scott! have you another bag of coins?"

"Sounds like it, don't it?"

"Why, there are ten times as many as before!"

"Ef 'tis money, an' I guess it's safe ter bet on that. I don't know's we had better open it here."

"But this other thing—"

The speaker stopped as Jack lifted the bar.

"How about the pirates' bullion?" the boy asked, coolly.

"Do you think this is gold?"

"I don't know. Dull-lookin' color, ain't it? But time may have changed it."

"I doubt if the pirates' bullion was pure gold. I don't understand much about bullion, old-time or new, but there is more likely to be a mixture, with the most precious ore predominating. I'll try it!"

Albert drew his knife and made the test, but found the bar too hard to be chipped off.

"Gold can be cut," observed Jack, doubtfully.

"Pure gold could be influenced, but I don't look for pure gold in this shape. How'd you find it?"

Jack told the story of his discovery.

"That settles it!" Albert declared.

"How so?"

"Do you suppose the pirates would have carried a box of these bars, and especially with them under lock and key, if they had been worthless?"

"I cave! We've found the bullion, an' we kin afford ter bear some loss on baser metals mixed in. Why, there's heaps o' them bars down there!"

Albert took his friend's hand.

"Jack, we're rich!" he declared.

"Millionaires!"

"Possibly we shall be, if we can get it all."

"We must! Say, we'll lay low until dark,

an' then work all night. We'll carry the whole lot ter the house."

"Not in one night."

"Why not?"

"If there is as much as you say, it will be a long, hard job to raise it, let alone taking it to the house."

"I s'pose we've got ter go slow, an', as the fust step, le's take what we have ter safer quarters."

This was good advice, for they might at any moment be interrupted, and when Jack had put off the rubber suit, they pulled to the shore. All their property could not be carried at once, so the rubber suit was left until the supposed treasure was safe in the attic. Next, Jack brought in what remained in the boat, and the work was done.

During his absence Albert had opened the bag, and the contents was scattered upon the table.

As had been hoped, the yield of the smaller bag had been repeated—doubloons and smaller coins were everywhere.

Jack thrust his hands deep into his pockets and surveyed the treasure with a comical air.

"D'ye know how houses sell in New York?" he asked.

"For cash, when possible."

"I know two chaps who kin pay cash. Eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"We will begin light," declared Jack-o'-Lantern, "an' buy one side o' Broadway from Maiden Lane to Fulton street."

He plunged his hand into the pile of coins.

"Figger upon these, Al," he directed.

The money was counted and estimated as before, and they decided that the new acquisition was worth twenty thousand dollars. The value of the smaller pieces was still unknown, but the figures were close enough to satisfy them. More than that, they were dazzled. Already they seemed like very rich persons, and the bullion remained to be secured.

How much there was of it, and what its value was, they did not know.

The remainder of the afternoon was passed in alternate periods of idleness and work on the coins, but Jack's tongue was never at rest. He indulged in the wildest day-dreams and castle-building imaginable, and his odd conceits kept Albert in the best of humor.

Treasure was not to be found in such a way every day.

It was not until near night that they remembered they had another object to interest them, but recollection of Allan Dix finally came to disturb Jack's mind.

"We'll hide our prey an' go ter the village this evenin'," he announced. "We may get some more news."

This plan met Albert's approval, and, after supper, they started for the village. They were nearing it when a horse and carriage, driven by a lady, came up behind and steadily gained upon them.

The lady was Sylvira, and Jack recognized her with friendly interest. He had always liked her, for she had never failed to give him a friendly word; and since he knew of the state of affairs between her and Allan Dix, his good opinion had greatly increased.

His eyes now brightened as she neared them, and he received the usual pleasant smile and kind greeting, but he could not but see how sad and pale she looked.

She drove past a few yards, looked around, hesitated, stopped her horse and motioned to Jack.

He was quickly by the side of the carriage.

"Have you seen Allan Dix?" she asked.

"Not sence he was took up, miss."

"Do you think he is guilty?"

"Do I?" cried Jack, his eyes flashing. "No, sir; I don't think so."

"Why not?"

"Because he ain't that kind of a man."

"I am glad to see you are so faithful to your friends, Jack."

"I know Allan, I do; an' he never hurt nobody."

"Jack, they say you are a shrewd boy."

"Well, I dunno, miss."

"How would you like to help me?"

"I'd do anything in the world for ye."

"Do you think you could make a detective?"

"On Allan's case?"

"No; on a new one."

"I'd like ter try, ef I kin help you."

"You shall hear," Sylvira answered; and then she told the story of the attempted burglary.

Jack and Albert listened with interest, but both failed to see the idea that was in her mind

until she plainly stated that though she did not understand the affair, she believed it was intended to injure Allan Dix further, in some way.

Albert received this statement with considerable doubt—which he did not express—but Jack promptly accepted Sylvira's view.

"That looks logical!" he declared.

"Do you understand *how* the burglar expected to hurt Allan Dix's case?" Sylvira asked, anxiously.

Jack made a desperate effort to "see," but as he was relying upon his impressions, and had no foundation whatever for the opinion, he failed to connect.

"I don't 'zactly ketch on," he admitted, "but I ain't a doubt but your idee is right."

"Do you understand what I want you to do?"

"Find the burglar."

"Yes. How will you do it?"

"He let a clew in the way o' that bottle."

"Exactly. I am glad to see that you realize the importance of that. Now, I feel that it would be useless to look for the would-be robber in any direct way, and a l turns upon the bottle of oil. Can you find out who owned it?"

"I kin try *hard*."

"It may not be easy."

"Jest what I was thinkin' on. Bottles of 'ile are rayther common."

"This was near full, and from its general condition, I thought it might have been purchased recently. Do you suppose you could learn anything by taking it to the various stores, to see if the merchants have sold—"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes."

"By Jinks! I've got an idee!"

"What is it?"

"I seen Burt Moffet buy jest sech a bottle of 'ile at Temple's, a week ago."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes; though I can't say posityve that 'twas this one. Temple furnished the bottle, an' he ought ter know. Burt Moffet," the speaker added, "is mean enough for anything."

"I believe that. Will you go into Temple's and see if they know anything about it?"

"I will, right off, quick."

"Do so, please. I am going to Mr. Woodson's, and you can come there to make your report."

"I won't keep ye waitin' long."

Jack was eager to get to work. He felt highly honored by the confidence placed in him, and was anxious to aid both Sylvira and Allan. The girl drove along, and the boys walked briskly after. Jack-o'-Lantern, true to his nature, began to build air-castles in which he was to circumvent the powers opposed to them; and Albert refrained from saying that there was no proof that the burglar had even heard of Allan Dix.

Jack, however, went to Temple's store with great confidence.

Once there his caution returned, and he approached the proprietor in a way not calculated to arouse suspicion. Coming gradually to the point, he finally produced the bottle and asked if Temple had any like it.

The merchant looked critically.

"No; but I had this very bottle, once."

"Sure?"

"Yes."

"How long ago?"

"A week or two."

"How kin you tell it's the same bottle?"

"Look on the bottom of it, and you will see it is imperfect there. See that little, sharp piece of glass sticking out? Well, I cut my finger on that, and I can swear to the bottle. I had it until I filled it with oil and sent it away."

"Who was the 'ile for?"

"Otis Preston!"

CHAPTER XIV.

JACK LOOKS IN.

JACK made a start which would certainly have surprised Temple if he had noticed it. The reply had not been expected by Jack. All he had hoped for was to establish the fact that Burt had bought it. He had not expected more; he had expected considerable trouble to get the next installment of news.

"Preston sent over by young Moffet to get it," the merchant added.

"Did Burt say so?"

"Yes."

"Do you s'pose he told the truth?"

"Why, yes; Preston often sends by him, and this was charged to him. See!"

Temple flapped open his book, and the account of Otis Preston was revealed. It showed that

five different articles had been charged on the same day, and the oil was one of the lot.

"Young Moffet got them all," Temple continued. "Preston always has his things charged, but he pays regular once a quarter. Otis is good pay."

Jack had learned what he wanted, and Albert was there as a witness to all that had been said; and now the boy began to wonder how he was to get away without being questioned in return. Luckily a customer came in at that time, and the young detectives seized the chance to leave the store.

Jack led the way to a retired place.

"How's that fur a beginnin'?" he asked.

"You have scored a big point."

"Should say so, by Jiminy! How does Mister Otis Preston show up now?"

"Unfavorably. Unless Burt lied when he got the oil, it looks as though Preston was in the game."

"Preston was the robber."

"Why do you think so?"

"Miss Sylvira said he was pooty good size, an' Burt don't fill that bill."

"That's a fact."

"Oh! Preston is the man."

"What could he want at Amesbury's?"

"Now you hev me. I don't know, an' that is the thing fur us ter find out next."

It occurred to Albert that this might prove no easy task, but he did not seek to discourage Jack. As soon as the latter had recovered his composure somewhat, they went to report to Sylvira, and when the story was told, they found her very ready to accept Jack's view of the case.

"You may safely believe that it was Preston, or some one sent by him," she declared. "I suspected it all along."

"He's mean enough; but what did he want?"

Sylvira shook her head.

"I have vainly tried to decide," she answered.

"How kin we find out?"

"I don't know; I feel helpless."

"I don't! Preston is only a man, an' I'm bound ter beat him."

"Providence grant you may!"

"Preston an' Barker Grainsleck are in the plot ag'in Allan, an' it wouldn't s'prise me ef Otis had put Barker up ter lie it enter our frien'. Somebody else hit Grainsleck, but they're bound ter git Allan inter the scrape. They sha'n't do it!"

This zeal greatly pleased Sylvira, but when they had talked further she was obliged to confess, to herself, that, pleasant as his assertions were, they were no more than boyish confidence. Jack had no idea how he was to accomplish his great work.

Sylvira felt, however, that considerable progress had been made, and she soon returned to Amesbury's.

When she had gone Jack and Albert wandered around for some time and listened to the prevailing conversation, but Jack did not forget that he had turned detective and, having an object to accomplish, must find some way to accomplish it.

He finally turned to his friend.

"Al, I've got an errand ter do. Had you jest as soon go ter the shed nigh Dix's store, an' wait fur me there?"

Albert answered that he had. It did not occur to him that Jack intended to take another detective step, or he might have insisted upon going along. They separated, and the adventurer walked briskly away.

The village, though scattered, was not large, and he soon neared his destination. This was a house which stood somewhat apart from the others, and in the midst of a collection of trees which, once well kept, were now fast assuming the aspect of a jungle.

It was the residence of Otis Preston, and Jack had come to investigate.

Darkness had fallen an hour before, and as there was but little danger of being seen, the boy climbed over the fence and invaded the grounds.

"New business, this is!" he soliloquized. "I wa'n't never in the habit o' breakin' an' enterin', but I s'pose detectives hev a right ter go whar they please. Anyhow, ef I kin trip up the rascals, an' help Allan, this job won't worry me."

He approached the house and saw that lights were burning in at least two rooms. One was in the part of the house which, he thought, was used as a kitchen, while the other was in a room at the side next to him.

Here, he felt sure, Preston was to be found.

"Wonder what the critter is doin'?"

There was only one way to settle this question, and he proceeded about it. The room was on the lower floor, and a piazza extended along

the entire side of the house. The curtains were lowered, but, as the windows were raised, it would be very easy to get a view of the interior.

Jack determined to gain such a view.

He moved to the piazza, and then crept carefully along. His bare feet gave forth no sound, and he was soon at the window. The need of caution became greater than ever, and he pushed aside one corner of the curtain with the greatest possible care.

The desired view of the interior was gained.

The room had one occupant, and one only. Otis Preston sat at a table, engaged in writing.

His right side was toward Jack, thus lessening the danger of discovery, and the latter soon perceived that he was engaged upon some task which absorbed his whole attention. Although a man of education, and a ready writer, his pen now moved very slowly and carefully, and in every way he showed that he had work of more than common importance.

Jack looked with wonder.

What task was the man worrying over?

The boy's gaze wandered, and it found something more of interest. A strange object lay upon the table in front of Preston. What was it? At first Jack thought it was an old-fashioned "sun-bonnet," but this idea soon vanished. Black of color, it was a good deal like a helmet, only there was more of it.

Suddenly an idea struck Jack, and it was so affecting that he let the curtain drop.

He remembered that the burglar of Amesbury house had worn a mask, and that Sylvira had said it was none of the wretched apologies for masks in general use—half-masks which make no disguise for the wearer—but one which was so full as to shut off all chance of recognition.

"Kin it be I've found the very 'dientikel ob-jick'?" thought Jack, in amazement. "Kin it be he would act so tremenjous foolish as ter leave the thing 'round arter bein' diskivered at Amesbury's?—ef it was him, an', of course, 'twas him."

Jack took another look.

There lay the queer object, and this second look only served to make him more positive.

It was the mask, and evidence was accumulating against Preston rapidly. Unless Jack was greatly in error, Preston was the burglar.

Preston pushed back his chair and arose. It almost seemed as though he had read Jack's thoughts, when, reaching out, he lifted the mask; but it was soon to be seen that he had a practical object in view.

He moved to the side of the room, where a fire-place pierced the wall, and threw the mask into the recess. Then he fumbled in his pockets, found a match and lighted it. When it was burning well he stooped with the evident intention of igniting the mask.

Jack went into a fever at once. If the mask was burned, a most important piece of evidence would be forever lost.

What was to be done?

Puff!

A breath of air came down the chimney, and the light was extinguished. Preston growled some irritable comment and threw the remainder of the match away. Then he searched his pockets again. This time he was not successful, and he turned and left the room.

It flashed upon Jack that he had gone for another match, in order to make sure of the destruction of the mask, and the boy's decision was at once made.

Brushing the curtain aside, he leaped through the window and stood in the room.

A few steps took him to the fire-place, and he secured the mask and turned away. Believing that Preston would soon return, he did not intend to delay, but as he turned he was brought face to face with the table, and the result of Preston's recent writing lay before him.

The temptation was too strong to be resisted, and he again stopped.

The first thing he saw was a sheet of paper upon which the name Allan A. Dix had been written not less than thirty times—that and nothing more. Next to it lay a legal-looking paper, half-printed and half-written; and beyond was a short letter which was signed with the initials "A. A. D."

All this was to Jack evidence of a deep plot on Preston's part, but he had time to look no further. He heard Preston's footsteps again and realized that he was returning.

Then Jack acted upon the impulse of the moment.

He made a grasp at the papers, secured them, and turned to retreat.

He had taken only a few steps when Preston appeared in the doorway, and the whole scene

was revealed to him. He paused in startled surprise, but the sight of the intruder hastening toward the window was enough to quickly stir him into action again.

"Stop, you thief!" he shouted; and then he made a rush for the person indicated.

Jack was not a boy to be alarmed easily, and he was not alarmed in this emergency. He had reached the window, and he sprang out with one effort. He was then on the piazza, and, as he afterward expressed it, had before him "the 'hull o' Long Island."

He continued his flight, but Preston was not disposed to let him off easily. He too leaped agilely out of the window, and then he dashed after the fugitive.

Jack had no great amount of fear. He was a good runner, and, unless he encountered some new obstacle, felt capable of racing with any one in the town; but the way in which Preston rushed across the grounds showed that he was no mean adversary.

Up to that time Preston had not had a fair view of him, and the possibility that he had not been recognized made Jack anxious to resort to secrecy. If he ran out of the grounds at once, Preston was likely to recognize him in the street, and he determined to try artifice.

The wilderness-like state of Preston's property, and the darkness of the night, made this possible and just as Preston had spread all sails, so to speak, for a straightaway race, Jack doubled around a group of rose-bushes and shot away in another direction.

The pursuer lost ground, and he lost his temper, too; he shouted angrily to the fugitive, and once more made a rush for him.

Jack-o'-Lantern was in high glee. His confidence was at the flood-tide, and he felt capable of playing hide-and-seek with Preston indefinitely. He would have liked to return a few words to aggravate him, but his voice might betray his identity.

"You scoundrel!" shouted Preston, "you are not going to get away from me. I'll have you if I keep this up all night, and when I get you, I'll land you in jail. I'll give you the full benefit of the law!"

His remarks and his movements came to a stop at the same moment. He had chased Jack around another group of bushes, and then he made a sudden discovery.

The fugitive had disappeared!

Preston looked sharply around and turned to the bushes. He plunged inside—Jack was not there.

It dawned upon the plotter that he had been outwitted, and he made a rush toward the road. No sign of the fugitive. He turned back and hastened through the grounds. He seemed to be the only person there. The startling truth dawned upon him.

He had lost the battle!

CHAPTER XV.

A DIVER COMES TO GRIEF.

It was the dawn of another morning.

Jack Lee partially rose from his bed in the attic and looked toward the little old table. Upon it were piled several of the peculiar bars of the old wreck, which they hoped and believed to be bullion. They represented the work of the previous night, done after the boys had returned from the village, and they had more reason than ever to feel jubilant.

Jack was still feasting his eyes when Albert awoke, and though their night's rest had been but short, the return of consciousness was enough to stop all tendency to sleep further. Wealth, as they thought, was there to a marvelous degree. Who would sleep when he could feast on such treasures?

They arose, dressed and looked the bullion over, and then looked again at the coins, to make sure they had not disappeared.

While thus occupied there was a new diversion.

Loud cries reached their ears, and as they seemed to be calls for help, the boys hastened to the window. They had an uninterrupted view of the beach, and as the cries continued, they were not long in locating them.

A boat was to be seen floating over the Shark's Back, and as they looked they saw a pair of arms beating the water near the craft.

"Somebody is drowning!" cried Albert.

"Yes; an' I know who 'tis. That's Burt Moffet's boat, sure pop. The 'tarnal snake has tried more tricks, an' come ter grief."

The speaker did not show much sorrow, but Albert spoke quickly.

"We must go to his help. He has got into trouble, and will drown unless he has help. Come on!"

He hurried away, and Jack was not slow to follow. Much as he disliked Burt, he was not inclined to let him die if he could help it, and if the boy's life was not in danger, his cries were very deceptive.

They hurried from the house and ran down the beach, but before they reached the water the cries had ceased. It looked as though they would be too late, but they did not pause. Quickly entering their own boat, they pulled for the Shark's Back.

During the trip Moffet's craft was between them and the point where they had seen the waving arms, and it was not until they had passed the other boat that they could see anything.

When they had done this, the facts were partially revealed at a glance. The head and arms of some person were to be seen above water, but not in their ordinary form. Their owner was incased in a diver's suit.

Evidently he was not dead, for there was a slight motion of the hands, but, plainly, he was in sore distress.

Jack swung the boat around and both seized the unknown and lifted stoutly, but there was some resistance from below.

"He's ketched in somethin'," observed Jack. "Jest hold onter him."

Albert obeyed, and his friend secured a knife and cut open the helmet part of the rubber suit. The dark, discolored face of Burt Moffet was revealed.

He was not dead, for his gaze was turned upon them with an agonized, appealing look, but it lacked but little of it. Once more Jack bade Albert hold fast, and then, still grasping the knife, he dove into the water. There was a brief delay; the resistance below ceased; Jack reappeared; and they drew Burt into the boat.

"He had a rope," Jack explained, "an' it got snarled on the ledge. Somehow, too, the air-tube got tangled up, an' that shut off stuff ter breathe. I hev an idee that he got skeered an' lost his head, or he wouldn't be in sech a fix."

While he was speaking they were getting the diving suit off of Burt, and when this was done he was given the most comfortable position possible. He seemed nearly unconscious, and they disregarded the fact that he had met his trouble by trying to meddle with their secret, and decided to take him to the house.

They rowed to the shore, but when they would have lifted him, he gave sudden signs of life.

"Let me alone!" he groaned. "Let me alone—I'm dyin'!"

"Stuff an' nonsense!" Jack retorted.

"I'm gone up!" Moffet reiterated.

"There's a good 'eal on ye still here."

"Oh! what shall I do?"

Jack was confident that the fellow was coming around all right, though a good deal frightened, and, perhaps, not quite right in his mind; so he winked to Albert and replied:

"The best ye kin do is ter make a confession."

"Will that help me?"

"Sartain."

"Then it wa'n't Allan Dix who hit Barker Grainsleck; it was Otis Preston!"

The statement was a complete surprise. Neither Jack nor Albert had been thinking about the affair at the village, and, whatever their suspicions had been, the confession was startling. Jack came near making an indiscreet exclamation, but grew wise and returned:

"Why did he hit him?"

"He owed Grainsleck money. The old man had a fit after Allan Dix let him at Sam Dick's gate, an' Preston come up an' robbed him o' the papers. Then he hit him with a club an' left him fur dead. I seen it all."

"Did Allan an' Grainsleck hev a fight?"

"No."

"Why did Grainsleck say Allan did it?"

"I s'pose when he come ter his senses he thought so."

Jack surprised Albert by suddenly thrusting an oar against the bank and pushing the boat into deeper water again. Then he began to row briskly.

"We're off fur the village!" he announced, in a whisper.

Albert caught the idea. Moffet had made a confession, and Jack wished to get him to the village without delay. There had been no witnesses to his statement except themselves, and it was very important that more should be had, if possible. Jack showed what he could do with the oars by sending the boat rapidly forward; Burt lay prostrate and rolled his head and groaned; while Albert sat in a state of suspense and awaited the result.

Like Jack, he believed that Burt was in no danger, and the great question became, would

he recover his mental powers soon enough to defeat their purpose?

When once more himself, he would probably deny all that he had admitted.

Jack was thinking of all this, too, and he put forth every effort of his strong young arms. It was a veritable race, the object being to get a confession from Burt. Jack, who had escaped from Preston without trouble, after evading him as before stated, had the masks and certain damaging papers safe, and if he could be properly accused of the assault, it would go hard with him.

They neared the village, and several men were to be seen standing on the beach. There were the desired witnesses, but would there be anything for them to hear? Burt lay with closed eyes, muttering indistinctly.

Nearer they drew to the shore, and Jack sent the boat up to a little pier. He motioned to the men to keep silent, and then turned again to Moffet.

"Burt," he said, his voice a little unsteady with anxiety, "why did you say Otis Preston hit Grainsleck?"

"He had stole the papers, an' didn't want it known."

"What papers?"

"Them that showed he owed Grainsleck money."

"He has tried ter make folks think Allan Dix hit Grainsleck, ain't he?"

"Yes."

"Did Allan touch the old man at all?"

"No."

"Did you see it all?"

"Yes."

"Where was you?"

"Close to Sam Dick's gate."

"Then it's Preston, not Dix, who ought ter be arrested fur hittin' Grainsleck, ain't it?"

"Yes."

Jack looked up at the witnesses he had so fortunately secured.

"Gents," he observed, "I don't want you ter forget what you've heard. This chap is Preston's helper, an' he's owned up. Allan is innocent, an' it depends on us ter hev it knowed. I hope you'll all hang tergether fur our friend Allan."

The men caught the idea, and a cheer arose. "To the jail!" they then shouted, in a ringing chorus.

Two hours later there was an affecting scene at the place where Allan had been imprisoned. Burt Moffet had been taken there at once, but the exercise of walking had quickened his mental faculties, and when he arrived at that point he stoutly denied all he had said before. Luckily, there was plenty of evidence, and as he was in the hands of men who did not scruple to talk what Jack called "business," he was soon frightened into making a full confession.

When he began to do odd jobs for Preston the latter had trusted him a good deal, and as Otis was secretly working against Grainsleck and robbing him, while pretending to be his friend, he had hired Burt to dog the old man.

On the night of the assault Burt had followed Grainsleck, and had overheard his talk with Allan at Sam Dick's gate. Allan had left the old man without harming him, but when he had gone, Grainsleck was seized with some illness and fell unconscious.

While he lay thus Preston came along on his way from Jonas Amesbury's. Finding Grainsleck, he had first robbed him, securing certain notes the insensible man held against him for borrowed money, and had then given the blow which had so nearly deprived him of life.

Burt had seen all, but not even Preston suspected the fact.

On being questioned in regard to the oil, the boy admitted that he had bought it for Preston, but he knew no more about it.

Allan's friends went to work with a will, and when a justice had heard the story, Preston was at once arrested. Sylvara and the Amesburys were summoned, and, after a consultation, another interview was had with Grainsleck. He was at first stubborn, but when Burt's story was made known his anger turned against Preston, and he admitted that he did not know who had assaulted him.

When he had said this the release of Allan was ordered and made, and, surrounded by his friends, who included Jack and Albert, he was in a mood when his pleasure at finding himself a free man was only equaled by his gratitude to Jack.

The boy found himself the hero of the hour, and his story of the mask made it plain that another crime could be charged to Preston.

The cause of justice and right was brightening.

Grainsleck recovered. His nature did not change, but Jack Lee surprised all by proving that he had means to pay off Allan's debt; and when the treasure of the wreck was finally turned into money, this was done.

It need only be said that Grainsleck lived out his life as friendless as ever, and we are done with him.

Preston was tried, convicted and sent to prison. It will be remembered that he had told Amesbury that he held papers *forged* by Allan. This, of course, was false, but he determined to forge some, and have the blame laid to Allan; and his midnight visit to Amesbury's was to get specimens of Allan's writing, which he knew were in the old desk. This he confessed after being convicted of the other crime.

No charge was made against Burt Moffet, and he soon left the village never to return.

Feeling the need of some man to manage further work at the wreck, Jack and Albert appointed Allan, offering him a share of the proceeds. The work was done, and the boys not only became rich, but Allan's share placed him beyond financial trouble.

He married Sylvara, and true happiness was theirs thereafter.

Jack and Albert hardly knew what to do with all their treasure, but they were wise enough to put it to good use, and in after years they went into business together and became well known in the city of New York.

Thus did the old pirates' plunder, after lying so long under the water, bring happiness and good luck to more than one person.

Shubal Gaylor did one good deed when he made the confession and revelation contained in the old manuscript.

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